THE

VILLAGE PASTOR.

BY

ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF

Body and Soul.

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PREFACE.

The author of the following pages, in introducing the Village Pastor to those beyond the sphere of his own quiet and retired circle, has only to remark by way, of Preface, that his design in adopting a mixed style of writing in conformity with the taste of the present day, is to represent, more attractively, the power and excellency of the Christian Faith, reflected through the medium of the Established Church.

The only controversial point, upon which he has touched, is one which has

peculiarly challenged his attention from its discordance with the spirit of the Gospel, in fomenting presumption on the one hand, and creating despair on the other; effects which tend very materially to subvert the great and leading duties of Christianity.

And as the author considers the doctrines and principles of the Established Church, the best practical comments on the Gospel, so has it been his aim to advance and promote them in this little sketch of character, presenting a faint picture of many, who are zealously, but unobtrusively "doing their Master's business," and spreading the heavenly virtues of their faith, through the flocks committed to their charge. The experience of many will testify, that this re-

semblance is not too closely drawn for those valuable, devout, and spiritually minded among the Established clergy, whose liberality, zeal, and sound knowledge, though inadequately appreciated, are a blessing to their country, and the times in which they live. This is not asserted invidiously. But, as a son, nurtured by the fostering care of a revered parent, loves and values that parent above all other connections, and is prompt, when called on, to defend and support her with a manliness and energy proportioned to the importance and goodness of her cause; so is it the duty of all, who have grown up beneath the shade and influence of the Established Church, and found her worthy of esteem and reverence, to prefer her above all other religious communities,

and be ready at all times to advocate her cause, firmly and charitably, against all assailants whether domestic or foreign, according to the ability bestowed upon them by the Common Father, who has enjoined all to "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

CHAP. I.

A DOMESTIC SKETCH.



A DOMESTIC SKETCH.

The cheerful blaze of the Pastor's humble fire was reflected from the happy countenances of himself, his wife, and children. The parlour in which they were sitting, and which served both for dining and drawing room, was of an antiquated cast, wainscoted, and here and there ornamented with grotesque carving. The furniture, in its arrangement, marked at once the character of the inmates of the parsonage; it was neat and plain, and equally remote from vulgarity and style. The substantial dining table and its multitudinous legs, were mahogany, with which the chairs corresponded. In simple usefulness hung the curtains, of a colour which neither flouted the glowing rays of ruddy evening, nor darkened the milder beams of gentle morn. No elegant lounges or Grecian settees invited listlessness, or inspired lethargy; but there was placed an old-fashioned sofa,

which, on general occasions, afforded a copious accommodation to the whole family, and, on any extraordinary event, which put more than the usual accommodations under requisition, it served the additional purpose of a bed by night. Opposite the fire-place stood an antiquated sideboard, on which glistened no shining plate, or dazzling glass, reflecting from its diamond carvings the fanciful and sportive lustres of an undulating brilliancy. Around the room were suspended no splendid frames of highly polished gilt, mocking the soberness of a peaceful landscape, or scoffing in golden importance the homeliness of a Dutch scene; but there were some pictures, whether by the first masters mattered not, of a domestic cast, the black and gilded frames of which were no disgrace either to their subject or execution. An air of neatness reigned throughout, and though fashion might disdain to bestow a look upon a place so out of the general style, comfort had there set its mark, and implanted all its endearing graces; and that word, so peculiarly English, was here written in an exposition so plainly, intelligibly, and characteristically, that no foreigner, who once had witnessed it, required the aid of a

dictionary to ascertain its meaning. If, however, the air of sober neatness and chastity which pervaded the apartment, deserved attention, that of the inmates was more deserving of notice. The Village Pastor was a subject worthy the most eloquent pen. The freshness of youth had not yet sunk beneath the winter of age; neither, on the other hand, were his roses untouched by time. The erect posture, indicative of firmness and activity, had lost something of its elasticity, without perceiving the change. The rapid glance of the eye was now tempered by the steady beamings of mildness, emanations from a mind attuned to virtue and communing with holiest things. The glowing cheek, the speaking forehead, the eloquent lips, all now conversed in the language of reason, modulated by the voice of divinity. The smile of happiness, such as virtue sheds over all situations, played round his manly features, and mocked as well the moroseness of gloom as the invidiousness of overstrained notions of religion: it indicated a heart at peace with itself, and whilst it encouraged the liveliness of youth and innocence, it restrained the wild burstings of intemperate mirth and giddy frivolity.

On this occasion, with the partner of his life seated near him, who had shared his chequered fortunes, administered to his comforts, and soothed him by her amiability, and with his children playing around in all the buoyancy of youthful sportiveness, his heart was dilating within him; — the years that were gone rose before him; — the difficulties which he had escaped, contrasted with the hopes that deluded, and the visions that had vanished, stole over his mind; — but, ere they could cloud with the slightest overshadowing, the calm placidity of his countenance, the reality of the scene before him, like the presence of the glorious sun dispersing the mists before they gather into showers, dissipated the intruding reflections, and enhanced the blissfulness of his imaginings. Memory of past trials shed endearment over his present comforts, as the remembrance of the severity of winter makes us hail with increased delight the exhilarating joyousness of spring. His smiles were those of contentment, his looks of gratitude; and if a sigh escaped him, it was one which denoted the fulness of a heart surcharged with bliss, occasionally extending its influence to his eyes, and descending in a tear

There are tears of joy as well as tears of woe:—one of those can wash away the bitterness of many of the opposite kind; it is like the droppings of the rainbow, a sign of happier things. When he turned his glistening eyes upon his wife, they beamed with chaste affection;—when he directed them to his children, they shot forth parental fondness; and the union of these lit up a fire, which rose like incense to the presence of the Almighty Father, and betrayed a father's gratitude mixed with a father's care. The occasion which diffused through his circle a more than ordinary degree of satisfaction and joy, was what to others might be looked upon with indifference, the anniversary of his union with his beloved Sarah. It was an union of affection, the cementing of hearts connected by the ties of virtue, uninfluenced by worldly considerations. She was the only child of one of his father's friends, who was also a fellow-steward of the mysteries of the Gospel.

With no fortune save her virtues and domestic qualities, and no particular attractions save her gentle modesty, and native amiability, she had long been the object of her Charles's fondest affection, and had been united to him with the

sanction of her only surviving parent, heightened by the benisons of all who knew her. Seventeen years had now elapsed since that event, and her love was still as fresh as when she modestly but firmly pledged herself to be "faithful to him till death should them part." They had seen days of sorrow, but they had never experienced misery, for they had "possessed their souls in patience," and committed themselves and their cause into the hands of a good God. Poverty had never caused them to diverge from the strict line of probity, neither had afflictions dulled their taste for social intercourse and domestic communion: they had grown up together like two thriving plants, each had been to the other a sheltering protection from the storm, and an ornament and a grace in safety and peace. They were now comfortably provided for, and of seven children but four remained; the education and management of whom was a duty both pleasing and profitable. Whilst the two girls, one fifteen and the other twelve years of age, occupied the attention of the mother, the boys, respectively of sixteen and fourteen, were objects of the father's care. In his classical studies he had cut some figure at the University; and a desire for

the improvement of his children, to whom he wished to give every advantage of education within his power, stimulated him to refresh his mind with the stores of Greece and Rome, that he might further them in their studies. Thus in their respective pursuits, the Pastor and his wife found an infinite source of gratification and delight. The beautiful remark of Rogers was frequently on their lips, but more frequently in their hearts.

"Happy, thrice happy, he, who bends to trace
That sun, the soul, just dawning in the face;
The burst, the glow, the animating strife,
The thoughts and passions stirring into life,
The forming utterance, the inquiring glance,
The giant waking from his ten-fold trance,
Till up he starts as conscious whence he came,
And all is light within the trembling frame."

Well, therefore, on this occasion of family rejoicing, might the Pastor's heart swell with sensations of delighted rapture. Seventeen years had rolled over their heads since the service of the church had made them one: this was the anniversary of that event. The prospect which was now before them was one that kings

might envy. His means of support were not extensive, but they were enough; for plenty does not consist in the affluence of riches, but in the disposition of the heart. One man is poor even in the possession of thousands, whilst another finds the sum of earthly happiness, and an ample supply for the service of the year, in what would scarcely suffice for his neighbour's daily extravagance. Two hundred pounds a year, arising from his church-preferment, which was a perpetual curacy, added to the same sum derived from a small estate inherited from a distant relation, constituted an ample support for the Rev. Charles Stanhope and his family. With this limited income (yet much greater than numbers of valuable men in the same sacred profession possess), he not only contrived to maintain the outward dignity becoming his situation, but he found something to spare with which to cheer the afflicted, raise the drooping, and assist the necessitous among his pastoral charge. He endeavoured to walk humbly with his God, and follow the steps of his Divine Master; whose disciple he showed himself to be in such an exemplary manner, that the words of Job, at once so prophetical and full of beauty,

might be applied to him: "When the ear heard him, then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him." He was in truth the shepherd of his flock; and though there are in all places some who are reprobate and will not list "the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely," as well as some whom the desire of novelty and a certain unsettled disposition induce to follow after the new and forsake the old, because it is established; yet a large majority of his parishioners were prompt in their attention to him, and felt and acknowledged the blessing of his spiritual care and direction; and even those who dissented from him, could not but respect his unswerving principles and extensive charity.

"At church with meek, and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway;
And fools that came to scoff remain'd to pray."

Goldsmith's picture, indeed, of the village clergyman was in him a portrait. In his own family he was at once the father and the friend, the husband and the lover: to his wife he was attentive and affectionate; his demeanour to his

children was a bright example of parental softness, chastened by consistent discipline. Affectionate without overweeningness, indulgent without remissness, his mildness won their love, whilst his firmness checked their foibles. From their earliest infancy, he had controuled their passions and exacted obedience to the voice of discipline. It was ever a maxim with him, that as soon as children manifest a predilection for any object, they are capable of receiving instruction; and he never yielded to them any thing for which they showed a petulant anxiety or an impatient desire. His word was the law to which they were subject, and when other means of exacting obedience failed, he spared not the rod, for he fully believed in the wise man's maxim, as well because it was dictated by the Divine Spirit, as because his own observation had furnished him with too many deplorable instances of the neglect of it. "So long as they are children," he would observe, "they must obey my injunctions implicitly: when they are capable of comprehending my reasons, I will avail myself of their understanding; but satisfied as I am in my own mind, that many of the moral evils which afflict society arise

from a total neglect of the capabilities of children, and an easy contempt for their perceptions, I am resolved, as far as I am able, to curb the little passions of my own, and mould their infant minds to render acquiescence to my wishes. It is only now, whilst they are twigs, that this can be done; when they become branches, more difficult will be the task to form and bend them to the inclination which we wish the tree to take." Experience proved that his opinions were just, and great was the reward which the conduct of his children conferred upon him and his Sarah; who ably seconded his views, and happiness and a well regulated temper accordingly "grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength." Before his babes could lisp the first articulate sound so dear to the parental ear, they had learned to hush, amid their little piques and passions, the voice of displeasure or disappointment, expressed in pettish cries, and extend to him the arm of reconciliation and offer the kiss of peace. Experience showed how truly he had appreciated the mind even of an infant. His frowns were feared, his smiles were loved; and his little family, whilst they were careful not to

offend, found no restraint from his presence, but rather an additional zest, to their little pastimes and childish sports; in which, when disengaged from more serious avocations, he would frequently join with all that buoyancy of delighted playfulness which enhances a happy father's purest enjoyments. He looked upon his children as talents lent by Heaven, to be cultivated with care, and rendered back with interest when called for, well assured that upon his proper attention to them depended much of his own present and eternal happiness; and that neglect or abuse would bring a proportionate return of care and misery.

Hence, when three of his babes were taken away, although nature struggled within him and awhile held mastery, yet when he called to mind the heavenly lessons of his faith, and considered how incumbent it was upon him both as a point of wisdom and duty to be patient in such tribulation, that he might rejoice in hope, and though he could not arrest the fiat of death which had gone forth, to remember the separation was but for a season, he bowed his head in meek submission; and as he raised his eyes to heaven, exclaimed, "Thy will be

done." Thus, even in death they were sources of improvement to him; and to bend the growing minds of those dear pledges who were still spared to him, like pliant twigs, to virtue and to usefulness, was his earnest and pleasing task; that whether they should soon be called from this sublunary scene, or continued for a longer period in it, they might alike be fitted for the society of Cherubim and Seraphim, or for "running the race set before them," as hopeful candidates "for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." When he marked their virtues expanding, and their minds budding forth into reason and intelligence, his heart would dilate with satisfaction; and it required, like the slave with Philip, the continual memento of "Set not your affection on things below," to prevent the interesting throb from bursting into vanity and pride. So closely do the best and most hallowed feelings of our nature border upon our failings! So strictly should we rein in the impulse of sensations, and keep them under the controul of reason and religion!

On a day like this, devoted as it was to purest rejoicing, human nature might plead the rapture

of the scene before him, as some extenuation for his indulging, altogether as a man, in the fondest contemplation of parental delight and wedded joy. It was a kind of lovely delirium which seized upon and wrapt his thoughts, feelings, and mind, in a syren-like enchantment. Imagination may shadow out the sketch, and those happy parents, who have themselves been witnesses of such a scene, may call to mind their own communings on such occasions, and from them learn the delightful trance of happiness which on this day in particular possessed the Village Pastor.

For nearly half an hour he had not uttered a word; but his wife read in his eloquent countenance the pleasures which absorbed him, and with her eyes she communed with his spirit. Unconscious of their father's reverie, and their mother's interesting contemplation, the children were sporting themselves in innocent amusements, and playful mirth. At length rising up, he opened his writing-desk, and casting round the groupe his joyful eyes, which when he had raised thankfully towards heaven, he sat down, and endeavoured, though faintly, to clothe his fond imaginings in the following

STANZAS.

How joyous the father's delight,
Such scenes of endearment to view,
And dwell on a vision as bright,
As hope's lovely pencil e'er drew.

Affection's sweet triumph is here;
A husband, a father, how blest!
When duty enshrines the pure tear
From the heart's overflowings exprest.

O Father of All! may I ne'er
Thy bountiful mercies forget,
But to Thee lift gratitude's prayer,
Till the sun of existence is set!

May the talents to me Thou hast given,
No pride, no vainglorying raise,
But the incense be wafted to heaven
Of duty, and honour, and praise!

Forgive, if in moments like this,
My soul with sweet rapture is fill'd,
And surveying this revel of bliss,
With earthly sensations is thrill'd.

Forgive, and thy servants still guide,
  That faithful our souls may be found,
When the bridegroom shall call for his bride,
  And the children of glory be crown'd.

CHAP. II.

A VILLAGE CHURCH.

A VILLAGE CHURCH.

The church which owned the ministration of our good Pastor was a venerable structure, situated on a little eminence which skirted one side of the village. It had stood there for centuries. Ave Marias had been repeated within its walls, prayers in an unknown tongue had been offered from its altar, and the little niches which still remained supplied the inference that images had been there of wood and stone; while those whose bottoms had been hollowed out on each side of the little porch, near to the massive, nail-studded, iron-ornamented door of entrance, had invited the worshipper to dip the finger into the consecrated element, and to mark the holy cross upon his forehead. These had passed away, and were succeeded by a worship more rational, pure, and consistent with the plain sanctity of the place. Ave Maria gave place to " Lord have mercy upon us !"—pray-

ers in an unknown tongue were changed into those which were winged to the throne of grace with the spirit and understanding also; and instead of images of saints, behold a plain oaken desk appended to a substantial pillar, to which was chained a godly treatise, the object of which was to afford to all a facility in knowing and being "able to give a reason for the hope that is in them." At a little distance from this stood, in primitive rudeness, a box supported by a plain column, ready to receive any offering which the hand of charity might be disposed to deposit in it for holy purposes; — the box remains, but the spirit which suggested and supported its purpose is fled: — it stands a venerable monitor of the more extended liberality of our forefathers, and the apathy of the present age. The custom has passed away, which made the village pastor the common almoner of the more affluent, and the dispenser of charity to the less fortunate; and though, perhaps, there is now a more splendid diffusion of this spirit, and instances of more profuse liberality are now to be produced, yet that homely principle of enabling the minister to feed his flock with food convenient for them is fading, — its very do-

mesticity is its bane, its unobtrusiveness its ruin. The poor's rates, it is true, were then unknown, yet, beneficent as in some instances they are, though by no means commensurate with the spirit which prompted their institution, they are inadequate substitutes for that spontaneous exercise of Christian charity, which made the minister of the establishment, as well the spiritual guide of his flock as the dispenser of material comforts to the poor. They exact what is paid grudgingly, and generally received without gratitude. Thus both contributors and receivers survey one another with unkindly feelings; and the spirit of good will to men, which the uncompelled offerings of the rich were calculated to foster, is evaporated, whilst one of a baser and more degrading nature is engendered. The only relic of this spirit within the church now, is this antiquated box, and the inconsistent custom of calling meetings for fixing the rates, and announcing the information when they are granted. Near this was placed the font, of size sufficient to satisfy the tender scruples of the most strenuous sticklers for infant immersion, and showed the disposition of our reformers on that subject, whilst its six-sided structure delineated as many

nondescript animals, as ranked high in the imagination of its Saxon carvers. It was canopied by a heavy piece of wood uncarved, unornamented. The massy pillars which formed an avenue down the church, stretching upwards on each side into four broad arches, evinced the rude but lasting workmanship of centuries gone by. The pulpit of black oak, with its antique carving, surmounted by a board tapering upwards to a point in a small spire of exquisite and elaborate carving, which restrained the sound it was intended to dissipate, was a rich banquet for the antiquarian: it combined elegance with simplicity; and whilst it displayed the handywork of science, was not without its devotional meaning. The altar and altar-rails were in admirable keeping with it. The windows, as far as regarded the apertures for light, commonly occupied by glass, were of a mixed character; fragments of stained glass were promiscuously joined with the dull, tattoed panes of distant days, and flouted with the transparent fragility of more modern manufacture. The hand of taste had left memorials of its beauty in some of the stone work; and though each window had something peculiar to itself, yet

there was a character common to them all, save to one, which some barbarous churchwarden had inserted near the reading desk, the modern squareness of which formed a paltry contrast to the pointed archings and tracery of stone which distinguished the others. There were few regular pews, excepting those belonging to the squire and the minister: the stalls were uniform, rising in the parts adjoining the aisle with an undulating sweep, into variously-shaped terminations, some, if not all, of which had been rudely sculptured by the hands of those in former days, who, freed from the necessity of pursuing any secular avocation, had time and leisure for such productions, which remain monuments of their skill, known but unrecognised.

Each stall had its peculiar appropriation; and the eye of the Pastor knew where to find any of his more aged parishioners during divine service. Some of them had tenanted their respective seats almost the time allotted to the life of man. Even during the performance of occasional duties, particularly at funerals, they would have seemed transplanted to other scenes, if they could not occupy their respective places; so that when any of them was removed by death,

the beautiful and mournful picture of Job was faithfully striking, "his place knew him no more." There is something of almost feudal affection in those who love to worship their Almighty Father in the house where their earthly fathers bowed, to the spots indented by their knees. It is an affection associated to the best feelings of the heart; and baneful is that effort, unallied to spiritual purity, which would destroy a principle grounded in "the form of godliness" vouchsafed to us by the inspiration of God's holy Spirit, without whose sanctifying influence our faith, our prayers, our hopes, are vain.

Chaste and elegantly firm was the roof: the naked rafters, it is true, were seen, but they were perfect and unincumbered by the superfluous supportings of huge mis-shapen cross-beams, which too frequently disfigure the plain and interesting overhead work of our village churches. A careful attention had been paid to the construction and disposition of these; hence they were neither so large as to create a duskiness of shade, nor so light as to give an idea of instability. At alternate distances some larger than the rest were based upon a little projecting pedestal, carved into the figure of

some quaint animals, which, it would seem, have not survived the Reformation, and of which there now remains not even the shadow of a record. The whole interior, indeed, had a sober cast, much differing from the light airiness and almost theatrical effulgency of modern conventicles. It suited that sober and rational form of worship, which was now offered up within it: a worship, dug by the hand of reformation from the ruins which popery had piled upon apostolicity and evangelism, and scoured, without injuring, from the rust and corruption such ruins had brought upon it. Like some antique column, which for ages has lain beneath accumulated piles of earth and rubbish, but which, when re-produced by the searching hand of enterprise, and cleared of its cohesive foulness by the chisel of taste and care, appears in its original dignity and beauty, unimpaired and fresh: so, the worship of the Church of England is now set forth in all the evangelical spirit which pervaded the assemblies of primitive Christianity, chaste, dignified, and spiritual.

The exterior of the church was grave, decent, and in character with the place, in which

is found the "beauty of holiness." From the western tower arose a small but elegant spire, which, tapering from its base, till it ended in what appeared a sharp point, seemed from its direction to lift the thoughts above, and

"Point the way to heaven."

This tower, in which also the bells were suspended, was placed at the western end, and was at once light and durable. It was surmounted at the four angles by as many square parapets, which diverged at the top into irregular cones: the buttresses projecting from the north and south corners of it widened in their descent; and in a few irregular places were stuck some rude sculpturings of grotesque heads and figures of anomalous animals, whilst one of them on the northern side was protruded like a spout, in the form of a fabulous dragon. Corresponding with these were placed, beneath the eavings of the roof, several rude stones of the likeness of the heads of fawns and satyrs, and martyrs and confessors; and on the elevation of the chancel, nearest to the body of the church, rose one almost in the shape of a pine-apple,

divided into four open compartments, the several crimped boundaries of which formed the figure of a cross. The rustic porch, with its plain seat, afforded a cooling recess in summer from the intensity of the sun, and a sheltering retreat in winter from the severity of the cold. How many an autograph was there, indented in rude mis-shapen letters, which might afford to the curious in kaligraphy a practical study, and convince the vain race of manual scribblers that, even with all their boast of fame, the time will come when "they must lie down in the grave," unnoted and unknown. The church-yard had its usual complement of rustic rhymes, quaint epitaphs, and the records of those whose only memorials extant are the date of their death and the length of their life.

There was nothing in any of them particularly remarkable. But who can wander through the habitations of the dead without experiencing some sensations of mortality? Infancy, youth, manhood, age, mixed in promiscuous assemblage, read a lesson to all; for who is there in each of these periods who does not miss from his circle of acquaintances several once coeval with himself? Each grassy mound,

swelling in circumscribed importance, proclaims to each passenger, "Thou too art mortal!"—and the grass that grows in unrestrained luxuriance in such spots in summer, but fades away at the approach of winter, appeals with a kindred voice; whilst the dust that crumbles from the side of a new-formed grave claims relationship with him whose foot carelessly, and it may be proudly, treads it down. A churchyard is a little world; and busy fancy might imagine in it all that constitutes "the great fabric of the earth:" even the active passions there find their symbols, and derive a moral. How well does the swelling of the turf image the stirrings and aimings of ambition, which, though it may a while rise above the mass around it, is limited, and in turn trodden down! The ancient walls of the church, rising in their native strength, like virtue, stand in their own mightiness and power, and shall survive when gayer and more fanciful piles, like showy qualities unbuoyed by principle and truth, have perished, and

"Left not a wreck behind."

There is, indeed, something about the ap-

pearance of a country church associated with the purest and most rational feelings of our nature. The venerable fabric, rising as it frequently does from the eminence of a small hill, carries with it an air of soberness and sanctity, which throws into the shade all less significant and meaner things. There is an indescribable feeling which seems to envelope us, when, as

> "Comes still evening on. and twilight grey,
> Has in its sober livery all things clad,"

we wander past the ancient walls which were reared by those whose dust is mingled with that on which we tread, and whose tempered piety is evidenced by the style of building now before us: — walls which have stood for centuries, and during that time have witnessed all those varying and important events which gem the page of our history, and throw over it an intensity of interest, to which no true son of Britannia can be insensible.

They who love to cherish the memory of those whose names they bear, derived from sire to son through a genealogy as clear and honoured by virtue as any which heraldry can blazon, may here indulge their imagination,

and, leaving present events, retrograde to times remote, when papal Rome exercised its bigoted dominion over the minds and actions of men, after that the British church had been deprived of its native authority. Thence may they shoot their excursive views beyond the era, when the conquering arms of Rome Imperial held this lovely isle in common vassalage; then may they pause in trembling awe amid those deep shades of solemnity, where dwelt the Druids, whose bloody superstitions held in mental thraldom their passive and credulous countrymen. Perhaps this very spot may have witnessed the successive rites of religious worship that distinguished the dynasties which have, in turn, possessed this country. Here may the yhule have flickered its religious flame, and Roman altars blazed; and here may have trod in their generation the ancestors of those who weekly cross this turf on their way to His courts, whom under various names all acknowlege, and adore with various worshippings. Thus, whilst imagination in its excursive flight is retrospectively ranging through realms of time, the heart may register, for its own edification, reasons and reflections, which attach men with patriotic affection to their native soil, and teach

them, in the proper performance of this duty, to behold with steady hope the prospect opened and marked out to them by Him, whose name and worship give sanctity to the temple, which here stands on consecrated ground, great in its own simple dignity. For durable as the rock of ages is that faith for which these walls form the sanctuary, not insignificant of their sacred trust, not unmeet emblems of that form of godliness hallowed within them. So that each one who is alive to the holy feelings which such places must suggest, may truly unite in the sentiments contained in these

STANZAS.

This is the temple of the Lord;
With cheerful tongues in sweet accord
Come, and your living thanks proclaim,
Great is the Lord, and great his name.

Here is religion's hallowed shrine;
The Christian's Schechinah divine,
And heaven's own cherubim proclaim,
Great is the Lord, and great his name.

The Sufferer, here, for mortals slain,
Who brought salvation in his train,

Asserts his own eternal claim,
Great is the Lamb, and great his name.

Oh! come, let heaven the strain inspire,
Faith warm our hearts with holy fire,
And all confess, in sweet acclaim,
Great is the Lord, and great his name.

The only memorial sculptured within the walls, besides some few in the old church text, which spake of knights and dames, was a plain marble tablet, perpetuating as well the name and birth of an infant, " the only child of his parents," as their loss and affliction, chastened by the principles of their faith. Beneath the register of the birth and death of this bud of mortality, the tablet bears recorded the following verses: —

Go, little flower, by death's untimely chill
Untimely shrivelled in thy bud so fair,
Go, happy thou! whilst we our Maker's will,
Whate'er our feelings, learn by faith to bear.

And though to us no more thy beauties bloom,
No more to light thy lovely form be given,
Yet hope is ours, when nature meets her doom,
Our souls shall join to part no more in heaven.

CHAP. III.

AN OLD AND A YOUNG SQUIRE.

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The mansion-house, which lorded it over the village, was one of those large brick buildings, which bear evidence to the chequered days of the elder Charles. Its general character was peace, with a kind of quaint affectation of the opposite quality. It belonged to a family who had been lords of the manor for some centuries; and who had never ceased to be conscious of the high importance of that title, which peculiarly belongs to merry England, — country squires; not that they were so exclusively Saxon as to refuse to admit any of the refinements of modern days. These they had adopted, however, with some caution, and though some good old customs of days gone by had been abolished; that of roast beef and plumb pudding, washed down with copious draughts of mellow October, was still found on all proper occasions in Elmtree Hall. The

family never quitted it, and except for a short summer trip to some favourite family watering place, as a treat to the younger branches of it, or for a week or two in town towards the latter end of January, before they returned back to school. The head of it, old Squire Richard, as the villagers called him, to distinguish him from young Richard his son, had once in his day been as keen a sportsman as ever entered the field; and for nearly twenty years he had maintained the reputation of being the first gentleman huntsman in the neighbourhood. He was what is termed a staunch Englishman; that is, his love for the land of his sires and birth was so intense, that it burnt up all other feelings of favour for any thing and every thing which belonged to other countries. To foreign manners and foreign customs he had a decided aversion. To quitting his paternal mansion for the enjoyment of a change of scene and pleasures in another land, he had objections amounting to absolute antipathy. Nothing in his opinion marked so strongly the degeneracy of the present age, and the awful and ruinous advance in refinement and luxury, as the thirst for expatriation, and the too general and incon-

siderate domiciliation of English families in foreign places: a practice so abhorrent as to require, in his estimation, the unbending interference of the legislature. When pressed on this point by any of his hunting associates, who were scenting the economy of the Continent, as an earth in which to recruit their estates from the hard chase of extra expenses, he would give a most positive negative, as well from the inherent love he cherished for his country, as from the detestation in which he held all those frivolities and vices, which have spread like an inundation over the moral features of Britain, from other lands, and almost demoralised the once impregnable principle of English worth. Though no orator, the Squire, in order to give effect to his opinions, would recite the following tale, which he said was drawn from real life, and written at his request by his friend the Village Pastor: —

Sir John, in patrimonial honours great,
Inherited a fair and large estate;
His father's care had left his manors clear,
And its low rental more than served the year.
His was the open hand; his generous cheer

Was known to all, and through the country ran
His fame, peculiar to the Englishman.
Beneath his eye, his sturdy tenants thrived,
And on their fathers' farms successive lived.
His was the manly soul that pleasure found
In English sports, on his paternal ground;
No need had he in foreign lands to roam,
For happiness the plant of his own home,
Since he through life his country's habits loved,
And his attachment by example proved
The patriot, Christian, and the man's best fame
Center'd in him, and graced his honour'd name.
Thus when he fell beneath the load of years,
His death call'd forth affection's unbought tears.
Alas! how changed the son: —unlike his sire,
His heart was slave to every wild desire;
Inflamed by pamper'd foibles freshly brought
From foreign states, by vicious worldlings sought,
And ere ten years had seen his father dead,
Bankrupt in wealth he from his country fled,
And left his manors and paternal hall,
Those mortgaged deep, this mouldering to its fall.
No more on those, a happy race is found
To till with hardy worth ancestral ground,
Where peace was wont to hold domestic reign,
And bind all hearts in friendship's silken chain;
Where happiness and health contented sway'd,
And ample means the labourer's toil repaid;

Where smiled each field with crops of fruitful grain,
And independence cheer'd the honest swain;
Where age and youth each other's lot admired,
And that successively for this retired;
Where well-wash'd cots, in well tilled gardens placed,
Redeem'd by cultivation from the waste,
Inspired the feelings which the heart expand,
Fill'd with devotion for its native land;
Where these were once, lo! different prospects rise,
Want, sickness, discontent, and miseries:
Dependence and compulsive pity hold
Jarring communion; peasants now are bold
In idle practices, and proudly claim
(At once the farmers' ruin and their shame,)
The scanty pittance which unnerves the soul,
And fits the man for slavery's controul.
No more the voice of hospitable cheer,
Which made his father to the country dear,
Mix'd with the festive sound of dance or song,
Echoes the ancient mansion's rooms among:
No more at blush of each autumnal morn
The fields reverberate to the huntsman's horn,
And men, and dogs, and horses, all rejoice
At the viewhalloo's spirit-stirring voice.
Ah, no! the knight pursues a different game,
Nightly he tracks those coverts dark of shame,
Where then, forgetting every generous aim,

With deaden'd soul, by foul dishonour thrive,
And on their fellow's spoils deceptive live.
Fell alchymist of every base design,
What crimes, destructions, guiltinesses thine,
Worst fiend of hell, each virtue's deadly bane!
Dark, dark, oh! dark, the attendants of thy train,
Insatiate gaming! first thy witchery
Seems fair and winning, but, oh! lost is he,
As one who trusts a Circe's cheating smiles,
Who yields himself to thy deceptive wiles.
So fared Sir John: at first, to pass away
The vacant hours, he join'd in moderate play,
Till onwards urged by fortune's favouring run,
He plunged in fearlessly, and was undone.
Thus stript of all, at length his steps he turn'd
To that best country he so long had spurn'd,
And in the dismal scenes by want supplied,
Unwept, unhonoured, unbefriended died!

This tale he would frequently repeat with great earnestness of manner, and enforce occasionally with a vehemence of action which spoke more of the field than of the stage; and still he led the chase. A circumstance, however, occurred which in his five-and-fortieth year arrested his further progress in these pursuits. His wife was suddenly taken from him by death, which so staggered him, that though hitherto unaccustomed to serious thought, he began to have some

whisperings within him that he was not made exclusively for this world, but that there were concerns of higher importance demanding his consideration, more than attending solely to the breed of dogs, the pedigree of a hunter, or the arrangement for a day's fox-hunting. Death, and that too of a dear and beloved wife, was an event that "trumpet-tongued" pealed to his heart a dread conviction; and made him think, however honourable the title of an English squire, that of a Christian is more valuable: and it was the care of his spiritual guide, the Village Pastor, to point out to him, that from the union of these two characters is constituted a member of society, "blessed in his generation," and a favourable aspirant after "an inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens." His object was happily crowned with success. Instead of flying from apathy of religious things to the asceticism of enthusiastic spirituality, by which he might have swerved as much from his duties as a man and member of society as he had before been wanting to "the things that belonged to his peace," the Squire awoke to a true sense of his condition, and the reasonableness of the service required of him. How

frequently do we find in those whom any event rouses to a sudden conviction of sin, a precipitancy in resolves and actions, which leads them, through a mistaken notion, to a gloominess of religion, as they call it, altogether incompatible with the duties of those who are placed here as well to love their neighbour as to worship God. Such hasty resolves and mistaken actions, followed as they often are either by a falling away which makes their last state worse than the first, or by a line of conduct which exhibits religion in the dress of a monkish devotee, rather than the cheerfulness of an angel of light, are in their excess blamable: for, though it is better to awake from sin in alarm, as from a dream of horror, than sleep on securely in deceitful repose, yet great care in such cases must be taken that the persons thus roused be judiciously treated; for even proper remedies, when applied either too hastily or in too great quantities, may administer death rather than health, and thus a blessing may be abused and turned into a curse. Heaven forbid, that any one should encourage the lethargy of sin at the expense even of that warmth of feeling, however misdirected, which precipitates men, Galilean-like,

to overstep the sober, rational, and chastened demeanour of "the faith as it is in Jesus," and thence reflected through the tempered medium of our reformed church. The observations which point out the errors of fanatics or religious zealots are never intended to sanction the irregularities or indifference of those who have yet to learn "that unless they repent they shall likewise perish," since to the righteous-over-much (if such a thing can really be), the harshest appellation that can be given is mistaken; whilst to the righteous-over-little belongs the alarming title of "slaves of sin" and "children of perdition." Whilst the goodly cedar, therefore, feels the pruning of the axe, let not the underwood imagine that it shall escape its deservings, "whose end is to be burned."

Though the Squire had not been, in any sense of the term, a religious character, yet he performed the public duties incumbent on him, as the master of a family and head of a village, with some regularity, whether for the sake of example, or from conviction, may easily be divined; perhaps it might be from a sense of the *moral* propriety of these things. Certain it is, that religion was not a vital principle. His

prayers were cold and heartless, and his attention to public worship was rather formal than from any spiritual guidance; and yet no one was more strictly moral or scrupulously exact in all transactions between man and man. But the performance of morality, as it is called, does not constitute the sum of duties required of the Christian, who must be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works," although they are indispensable; otherwise, why did Christ come into the world? Why did "he die for our sins, and rise again for our justification?" As a teacher of morality he added little that was new; since from the code of nature and Judaism may be culled almost every principle of moral duty which he enjoins to his followers. He, however, stamped them with an impress transcendantly superior, and rendered the obligation of their performance at once more binding, and indissolubly connected with the Spirit. The morality of the Gospel, though differing little from that of wise heathens, is far, infinitely superior to it, inasmuch as it pretends not to perfection, but depends for its efficacy alone upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and is regulated solely by faith in Him, "who is the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth."

Roused from his apathy by the lamented death of his wife, the old Squire felt a deep conviction of his state as a man and a sinner; a conviction considerably heightened by certain old-fashioned notions which had been infixed in his memory when a child, contained in that goodly summary of faith and practice, called "The Church Catechism." The seed of virtue thus sown in his heart, and there left almost dormant for want of the due culture of himself in after-life, on the application to it of the influence of the Holy Spirit by this domestic affliction, soon struck deeper root, and showed itself by a humbling of former ideas, and a liveliness of religious observances, which evinced to man a proof of his renewal in the way of life. He ceased from his former pursuits, without, however, anathametising those who still persevered in them: he continued not his revellings till the late hour, but his table was still the scene of hospitality; cheerfulness was the guest that garnished his board, and welcome presided to enhance the feast. The presence of the inmates of the Parsonage frequently enlivened his society; and on these occasions were to be seen in the Pastor the value of a sound, religious

mind, able to instruct; and in the Squire the humility of a convicted sinner willing to be taught. Their conversation was not exclusively religious, for they both deprecated making a parade of it, and mixing it heterogeneously with other things. Mr. Stanhope thought with Solomon, that "that there is a time for all things;" yet, in his conversations with the Squire, the ruling principle was religion; and as the radii of a circle, however remote in their extension, meet in the same centre, so all their themes, however diversified, had reference to that prime object, developed in the interminable prospect which the day-spring from on high has opened, the glory of God.

Seeing many things now through a different medium, and awakened to the serious reflection, that not only had his former indifference to religion dulled his own best feelings, but produced from its example carelessness and contempt in his son, and many of his servants, which he would now most gladly have cancelled, he was anxious to "redeem the time," which he knew he only could do by assistance from above, as it regarded himself, "by a double diligence for the future," and by a stricter and

more principled attention to the moral and religious deportment of his family, to make some atonement, if possible, for the evils which his former habits had produced. For, how true it is, that we are rather disposed to imitate that which falls in with our notions of licentiousness and irreligion, when sanctioned by our superiors, than adopt their habits and dispositions which are scrupulously moral and spiritually correct. Squire Richard now found the truth of this by sad experience, as he termed it. Sad indeed it was, for his son, his only son, without regarding his father's strict attention to moral decorum, had carefully copied, but with higher colouring and more vivid touches, his father's foibles and derelictions. These he had caught when a child, and it was in vain that his mother, in her sense of propriety and religion, would have instilled into his youthful mind principles of reverence for the Supreme, and all the weighty truths of the Gospel, together with a tender regard for the feelings and interests as well of himself as of others. The stable, with all its concomitant choice expressions of hunting terms, and notions of vulgarity stamped current by their adoption by lordly huntsmen and genteel

whippers-in, offered to him a vocabulary far more interesting than the Church Catechism, or the twelve good golden rules. Books were so much his aversion, that before he could read he was able to manage his pony, and imitate all the calls and halloos used in hunting. In due time he was sent to a large school, from which, at seventeen, he migrated to one of the universities. In both these the necessity of attending Divine Service, and the compulsory means adopted in the latter, to what appears to such youths in general a farce, added not to his respect for religion and its services. She was too mild, too staid, too retiring a matron for his affections: he loved the open, unrestricted, laughing features of pleasure, whose fascinating smiles fixed her mistress of his soul. There were in him, nevertheless, feelings capable of better impressions; but, like all impressions which have no better foundation than feelings, they were evanescent, "the tract of a bird through the air." If a tale of distress were poured into his ear, and his charity awakened, his hand would unconsciously seek his purse, and without discretion he would give cheerfully and liberally. And yet, perhaps, within a little

day, through utter thoughtlessness of every thing except the gratification of his pleasures, he would not hesitate to wound the peace of a family, by robbing it of the fairest jewel which adorns the loveliest of our race. The fact was, he had no stability of character for any thing which implied seriousness. He was a feather blown by every breeze of pleasure,—a machine moved by the springs of feelings, which soon cease their action; but to any thing decidedly religious he was an immovable rock. He could dwell with delight on the page that glistened with the speciousness of feeling, and enter with deepest sympathy into those impassioned narratives which are to the mental world what hot-beds are to the vegetable kingdom, productive of speedy effects, but unsubstantial, forced, and short-lived. Such tissues of unnatural and inflated events are a species of poison sweet to the taste but deleterious in operation. The sanguine and romantic turn of youthful minds requires rather the correction of sober reason, and lessons that tend to regulate their buoyant spirits, than the pernicious excitements which much general society is calculated to incite, and many of the works of the present day

pamper. The general education of youth seems intended rather to fit them for limited pursuits, and blaze forth meteors of a day, than to qualify them for the performance of duties which have an eternal reward, and prepare them for the calm splendour "which fadeth not away." The arts, bodily accomplishments, and outward attractions, constitute the grand sum of instruction which is sedulously instilled into the minds of those who are at the best but creatures of a day, as they regard this world; but, viewed in their true light, in their connection with immortality, beings capable of everlasting glory, or sensible to never-dying miseries. What wonder, then, that among the many thousands who are floating down the ocean of life, so few are guided by the helm of Faith, steer by the sails of Charity, or moor their vessel by the anchor of Hope! The gay pinnace of Fashion, wafted forward by the flaunting gales of Pride and human corruption, is the vessel in which thousands are carried down the vortex of sin, till stranded on those rocks on which remorse sits grinning in fiendish malignity, and conscience howls the dirge of peace and innocence, lost, wrecked, undone. It is not, however, intended to assert

that such is always or invariably the case. *Some* attention is occasionally given to an affair of the last importance by the rich, the powerful, and the comfortable part of the community, who, blest with worldly goods, reverse the injunction of the Saviour, and first seek their personal comforts, aggrandisement, and pleasures, and when weary or incapable of these, turn their thoughts to "seek the kingdom of heaven and his righteousness." True, exceptions are to be found, the brilliancy of whose light may serve to illumine the darkness which the gross aberrations of others may condense; but yet the majority of youths, to whose education attention is paid, are instructed in things relating to this world, with infinitely more care than in those which involve

"The vast concerns of an eternal life."

To no part of the rising generations do these observations more strictly apply than to the females, the direction of whose minds is, oh shame! too frequently left to the management of foreign governesses, who either have no religious principles at all, or such as are a perver-

sion of the simplicity and dignity of that "form of sound" words which was delivered to the saints.

In this respect the children of the poor possess a decided advantage over those of the rich and affluent. Those noble monuments of charity in its evangelical sense, the National Schools as they are termed, seem to afford, and do in reality possess, very much of what constitutes a religious education. The children taught in them have, and may they be duly sensible of the blessing! opportunities of knowing "the things which belong to their eternal peace" in all plainness and unworldly sincerity. "The poor have, in truth, the Gospel preached to them:" it forms one grand ingredient of their mental aliment; it is the milk which nurtures all their growing reason; whilst to the higher ranks of life the absence of this, as an essential part of instruction, instilled with judgment and enforced by example, is a defect from which spring many of those vices which too often dim the splendour of rank and wealth. Young Richard was a striking proof of this. The flashy parts of acquirements were the objects of his attention, and the pleasures of this world seemed with him

"the one thing needful." Hence, his passions were his guides, and his feelings passed for principles. No wonder, then, that the period to be passed at the University was to him a halo of pleasure rather than a sun of improvement, and that he preferred the excess of all those indulgences to which circumstances and imperfections gave some show of countenance, to the employment of those real and solid advantages which each *alma mater* is so bountiful in the means of bestowing. His associates were selected from men of fortune and style, who seem to have no other aim during their residence of three or four years, than the devoting of so much time to the indulgence of their passions, and the acquisition of habits and pursuits which form a world of sin, and from which in future life they can rarely emancipate themselves; and hence many a name which has been ennobled by deeds of worthiness and acts of greatness, both in public and private, is sullied by the degenerate foppery or unchristian profaneness of those whose only claim upon society is that which should make them blush, the recommendation of their family. Youth is certainly the season for active pleasures, and he is more than

a cynic who would deprive them of all those recreations and enjoyments which are natural to them; but young people should remember, that those very indulgences either may prove their banes or be converted into advantages, and that whilst a dissipated youth never fails of creating a retrospect of sorrow in old age, the morning of life well employed is always followed by a serenity of evening glorious and calm.

"Rejoice, therefore, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

CHAP. IV.

FRIENDSHIP AND AFFECTION.

FRIENDSHIP AND AFFECTION.

It has been well observed by many, that persons of opposite habits and taste very frequently unite in friendship, and form ties the most binding and endearing. The strict and devoted friendship of Alcibiades and Socrates is a memorial inscribed on the page of history; and a very shallow observer of human nature may from his circle of observation select many instances in proof of this remark. The truth of this also was evidenced, in one exception, among the college companions and associates of the young Squire. Mr. Harley, a gentleman about twenty-three years of age, shared his esteem, whose character was of a higher nature, and whose disposition, talents, and studies, were more amiable, exalted, and rational. He was of a decidedly serious cast; although not of that tempered seriousness which a proper view of religion imparts, but that darksome shade which

gives an unsocial appearance to its votaries, and brings on a narrowed prejudice of judgment which trenches upon charity, and limits the ideas of the goodness and mercy of God. The former of these might have had their origin in him from the distressing events which had gloomed the sunshine of his short life, and the latter might have been contracted from the habits of a maiden aunt, who had obtained a powerful influence over him during his days of sorrow. He was an orphan. A mother's tender care he had experienced only when he was not conscious of it, and a father's protection was taken from him just as he began to know its value: the former had died whilst he was yet in his infancy, and the latter was removed from this transitory scene, by a fever which baffled all medical skill, just as his son was attaining his nineteenth year. An only and beloved sister had fallen a victim to the same malignant disease, brought on by her attention to her father during his illness: she had strength to follow him to the grave, and within a fortnight slept in the same narrow house. Her opening beauties attracted every eye, her mental accomplishments gained general admiration,

whilst the amiability of her deportment, and her cheerful disposition, regulated by, and arising from, just principles of religion, made her at once the delight and ornament of her father's house, and the object of esteem to all who knew her. As in a day in spring, — whose morn is bright in cloudless glory, and which by its softness and geniality invites nature to put forth her tender blossoms and open her perfumes to the gales, which are shrivelled into decay, and the joyous hopes of a rich harvest blasted ere the noon by some envious shower, — she fell in youth's smiling dawn, but not unwept, nor unhonoured, nor unsung: for immediately after her death the following tribute was paid her in one of the public prints: —

And is she then gone? is the cheek where once bloom'd
The fresh bud of beauty by sickness consumed?
And the eye, that was blue as the bell on the heath,
Now darksome, and closed in the silence of death?

Can the smile of affection, or sympathy's sigh
Teach the heart that is lonely its grief to deny;
Or bid the sad breast its despair to forego,
When sorrow makes sacred the tears as they flow?

Mourn on then, lorn brother, sincere is thy woe,
Thy grief is what none save the lonely can know :
The sister thou mournst for was lovely and dear,
And give what thou canst, — thou canst give but a
tear !

She is gone, who was graceful in form as in mind,
And the one was as fair as the other refined ;
But beauty must fade, and the mind must decay,
From the touch of the tyrant, whom all must obey.

Though the stillness of death has enwrapped the fair
form,
And the cheek that was lovely now fattens the worm,
Yet the soul that on earth beam'd with virtue and
love
An angel has borne to its kindred above.

Thus bereft of his parents and sister, he might feelingly apostrophize with Young : —

"Insatiate archer ! could not one suffice ?"

He had, it is true, many bright specks of comfort, on which his contemplations might repose in soothing hope. The manly virtues of his father arising, as they did, from a deep and heartfelt conviction of the sublime truths and

soul-searching doctrines of the Gospel, were to him a cheering earnest of his removal from a world of trials and difficulties to one of glory and immortality, and formed a theme of encouragement for him to meet unshrinkingly the various calamities of life, and relying on the same faith as had animated him, to "hope unto the end;" whilst the amiable qualities of his sister, gentle and unobtrusive as religion herself, stole over his soul, like a vision of bliss, and soothed him with the assurance, that "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The death-scenes of these two dear objects of his earthly love were deeply engraven on his memory, and his ears still retained the sounds of their voices, encouraging him to "fight the good fight of faith," and breathing, in accents of patient suffering, their entire resignation to the will of God. "My son," said the dying father, "if you would die the death of a Christian, and have your bed of sickness smoothed by the tranquillising influence of a conscience at peace with God, you must live a life of habitual faith, and by it lay hold on the merits of that Saviour, whose grace aboundeth to the putting away of

sin, in 'all those who love him and keep his commandments.'"

"My dear brother," were the words of his sister, as like a blighted flower her head was bowed down by the weight of death, whilst her eyes were lighted up with a fire of holy radiance, and beams of heavenly rapture animated her looks;—"my dear brother, think me not unkind that I express no regret at being called away from one I love so fully with a sister's love; my soul has nothing now to do with this world; it is ready to depart, and waiting with joyful hope in the merits of my Saviour for that summons, already sent forth, which shall call it home. Thy will be done, O God; and, oh! my brother, cleave unto him, seek him early, forget not your Creator, love him above all things, and then the trials which now await you will be blessings, blessings rich and multiplied. Farewell, my brother; the God of mercies bless you, and may we meet, as assuredly my soul inclines me to hope, may we meet in that better world, where 'death is swallowed up in victory, and every tear is wiped off every eye.'"

These interesting scenes and lessons left upon his mind an indelible impression; and though

for a while the feelings of nature bowed him to the earth in bitterness of grief, and sorrow, and mourning, yet by degrees they rose upon *his* soul as stars of hope and beacons of comfort, and hushed the tumult of his troubles to an approach of calm. It was in this state of stricken sorrow that his father's sister, whose rigid abstinence from the world and close reserve on every subject except religion, had gained for her a reputation of excessive piety, won upon his attention by her watchfulness over him at this season of trial; and thus, whilst her ascetic manners tended to heighten his gloominess of deportment, her peculiar notions of religion imbued his mind with opinions of the Most High and his dispensations to man, which presume to set bounds to the mercy of God, and disable all but a *select few* from coming to heaven. Though he could not adopt the dogmas of Calvin in their full extent at first by reason of the tenacity of his former principles, yet by degrees they lost their repugnancy, and by freely admitting the attenuations of that reformer's doctrines as defined by his modern followers, he soon lost his former scruples, and became at length, in spite of all pre-

tensions to the contrary, a rigid Calvinist. He had discovered that there could be no medium in this, that he must either admit Calvin's peculiar opinions in full, or he must reject them altogether: all halting or attenuation between these he looked upon as a compromising of conscience, or a systematic exercise of hypocrisy. The trying situation in which he had been placed was favourable to such conclusion.

By his father's death he became possessed of an estate of three or four hundred pounds a year, and a considerable sum vested in stock. His worldly circumstances were therefore comfortable, and placed him above the necessity of pursuing any of the professions, except as a matter of choice; and living as he did immured in his own house, seeing no society, and with a very limited establishment, at the head of which was his maiden aunt, what wonder that the visitations of affliction were still visibly written on his appearance, and that, though time and religion had stilled the stormier bursts of sorrow, he still evinced and loved the gloomy and reclusive habits, which made him almost a stranger to the world, its cares as well as duties. For were there no duties to call forth our

energies, were there no talents to employ for the service of others as well as for ourselves, then would a seclusion from the world be indeed desirable, especially to those whose hopes have been withered, and prospects of earthly happiness blighted; but so long as the second table of the commandments, sanctioned and spiritualised, as it is, by the adjunct of the message of glad tidings, which with "glory to God" linked "good will to man," — so long as we are connected to one another by the ties of affection and friendship, and engirdled as it were by an universal chain of social duties, man to man, however separated by jarring interests and diverse pursuits, it is incumbent upon us not to shrink from the station in which we are placed, but to meet manfully and actively the various trials to which we are exposed, without swerving from our temporal duties. Yet, as this world is not our home, and as the talents committed to our charge are intended to be employed and improved by us in reference to eternity, in which the use or abuse of them shall confer upon us either a corresponding weight of glory, or a proportionate doom of misery, we are called upon both by the voice of

religion and the best interests of our never-dying souls, "first to seek the kingdom of heaven and his righteousness," and in the strength of this perform every duty, "which our hand findeth to do, with all our might." The tide of afflictions is not to carry us away from the discharge of our social duties, but rather by elevating our thoughts and affections to higher and better things, to send us back, after a short though painful interruption, with a deeper sense of God's power and goodness, and our weakness and dependence, and to work in us a stronger desire to love him more, by cultivating the talent he has given us with greater care, and to embrace with purer, because with more compassionate, * sentiments, our fellow-creatures.

Had Mr. Harley been regulated by these

* How beautifully this word expresses that sympathy for others, which can only be entertained by those who themselves have felt and endured the very same sufferings which they are called upon to commiserate in others. Perhaps no stronger illustration of this can be given than by reference to the concluding part of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth chapter of Hebrews: in this portion of Scripture the interest which the Saviour takes in us is strongly represented for our encouragement, because "our High Priest can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," from having been himself ex-

sentiments he would not have been so long secluded from the world; he would not have waited till the very repugnancy of such retirement to those sensations of activity, which belong if not exclusively yet peculiarly to youth, began at length to suggest the idea, that such monastic seclusion was not altogether consistent with his years or duties as a member of society. The difficulty with him, at first, was how to turn himself to a pursuit in which he might be most useful. His religious impressions, however, soon led him to consider the ministry as a field best adapted to his habits and principles. Accordingly he made arrangements for going to one of the universities, and in due time entered upon his academical studies with an alacrity and a zeal which augured well of his talents and future honours. Here it was that he met with the young Squire, who though so opposite in his general pursuits had still something about him which attracted his attention, and made him seize every opportunity of being with him, when his pursuits permitted, without,

posed to the temptations to which we are liable: he can therefore have compassion, like the high priest taken from among men, on the ignorant, &c.

however, the compromise of what he justly esteemed higher duties and sounder principles. He was inflexible to all invitations which would have involved him in a participation of scenes that have a direct tendency by their indulgence to sensualise the best affections and destroy religion: his attendance on the stated duties of public worship was marked by a grave and devout deportment; and his conversation was that of one who limits not his views to this world, but who exalts his mind and thoughts to the contemplation of things eternal, and to the acquisition of habits and accomplishments which fit mortality for the blessed enjoyment of immortality. Not that he was altogether indifferent to this world; yet his attention to it was rendered awkward by an obtrusion into it of sacred things, which had the effect of neutralising the one, and diminishing the estimation of the other. The introduction of religion and religious topics at *all* times, without discretion, has the effect of rendering them obnoxious to many, who are not yet settled in their faith, and of producing in them greater mischief than the open attacks of infidelity, or the avowed declarations of unblushing profligacy; for the

latter by their overcharge create their own nausea, whilst the former, by its inconsistency, deadens their relish for it. Into this error of misguided zeal Mr. Harley frequently fell, not, however, at times, without a consciousness of impertinency. Whenever he acted thus with young Richard he failed of his effect, but when, abstracted from the world, and sitting quietly and alone in their rooms, he aptly introduced the subject of religion, he gained a willing if not a profiting auditor. He was with him when Richard received the tidings of his mother's death, — an event which renewed the remembrance of his own sorrows, and made him a most fit person to weep with him that wept. It was also a favourable opportunity to press upon his thoughtless and inconsiderate friend serious considerations of religion, heightened as his lessons were by an appeal to the trying situation in which he himself had been placed, the admonitions which had engaged him to a steadfast continuance in the ways of godliness, and the example of unaffected piety and unreserved resignation displayed by his father and sister on the bed of death. These lessons, coming from one so little his senior, but so

much his superior in all useful acquirements, seemed not given in vain. Young Richard's feelings, awakened as they were by the loss of his mother, were easily wrought upon by the impassioned observations of Mr. Harley; and he startled at the remembrance of his past follies, and made a hasty resolve to "sin no more." With all the zealous impetuosity of his sensitive feelings his resolution was taken; "at one fell swoop" he abjured all former habits and associates, cast off all previous sentiments and idle practices, and became all at once a gloomy and rigid character. Such at least was his resolve: incapable of maturing reason, or weighing deliberately any proposition, he precipitately assumed a deportment diametrically opposite to his previous one. So long as his feelings remained in a state of excitation, he persevered in his new character: when they cooled, a falling off ensued; till at length he exhibited, at times not very remote, an inconsistency of action which all who could judge dispassionately of his conversion, as it was called, from the first anticipated. Like the voyager mentioned in Captain Franklin's interesting journey, who was frozen and oppressed

with heat the same day, he now seemed chilled to all sociability and friendly intercourse, and now dissolved in all the warmth of excessive indulgence. In this chequered and vacillating state he continued, in spite of all the admonitions and practical references of his friend Harley, to whose affectionate and disinterested attentions, however, he felt himself so much indebted, that with all the warmth of grateful feelings, he pressed upon him a sincere invitation to accompany him to his father's house, to pass the long vacation; an invitation which his friend was in no wise disposed to refuse, and they accordingly set off together to Elmtree Hall, where they were both received with a hearty and affectionate welcome by the old Squire, who had been advertised of their coming by a previous post. He hailed his son with all that depth of feeling which a parent's affection, heightened by an intense anxiety to redeem the past, could excite; and he welcomed his son's friend with all the staple cordiality of English hospitality, rendered more engaging by a frankness of manner that bespoke sincerity; a mode too much disused, but which when found cannot be too highly admired or too uni-

versally adopted. The sable garb which invested the Squire with the exterior badge of widowed sorrow, was an introduction to Mr. Harley, which prevented the necessity of that stately and cool form which makes two strangers acquainted respectively with each other's name, and extracts the unmeaning bow of acknowledgment, whilst the traces of grief yet indented on the macerated features of Mr. Harley, together with a knowledge of his attention to his son, won at once his friendship, and established him into his esteem.

The private interview between father and son was one of sympathy and great affection; it was the first time they had met since the wife and mother, dear, most dear, to the husband and the son, was called hence. The clenched grasp of hands, the reclining of the head on a congenial neck, the eye surcharged with the dew of sorrow, stagnant through excess, the bosom heaving with feelings too large for their bounds,—all indicated hearts touched with the sacred rod of grief, and bowed down by the weight of personal affliction. At length burst from the lips of each reciprocally, "My son!"—"My father!" in tones that melted in utterance,

and flooded all the souls in the eloquent luxury of grief indulged. As dew to the parched land, and a cooling stream to the thirsty deer, so is the pouring forth of tears to the stricken heart. There is a sanctity in venting our sorrows for a beloved object taken from us, than which, when moderated by the Christian's hope, nothing can be more pure, nothing more refining to the best and holiest longings of the soul. It is a sanctity doubly sanctified by those two emphatic words which throw a spell over the eleventh chapter of the beloved evangelist, that rivets with unconscious attraction every reader, and more especially fixes the attention of youth, whose lively and susceptible feelings in this instance are better than their reason, — "JESUS WEPT." Yes, that pattern of all perfection, — He, who with the widest and most extended span of love embraced every son of Adam, — He, whose throne was heaven, and whose human birth was announced to an astonished world by signs in heaven, attended by angelic songs, — He, who laid down his life a ransom for a guilty world, — He was alive to individual affection; He tasted all the sweets of reciprocal friendship, and with it all the poignancy of

blighted hopes and funereal sorrow. "Behold, how he loved him," marks his affection; and the touching words of "Jesus wept," at once enshrine that affection, and impart a sanctity to the tears which widowed sorrow pays to those who once were objects of our love, esteem, or gratitude.

The interview between father and son was most interesting; it afforded a goodly and effective lesson to behold nature struggling with reason, like the sun striving with the envious mist, to witness the contest for mastery between the feelings of the man and the principles of the Christian. Whilst the heart is the seat of contest, the face is the mirror on which the representation is delineated, and which exhibits to a careful observer a picture superior to the finest touches of the most eloquent pencil. For, though the canvass may glow with all the beamings of "the human face divine," and represent the lines of passion, emotion, and placidity, yet what touch, what colouring, light or shade, can embody the transition from grief to calmness, from sorrow to resignation! The amended principles of the father supported him in this trial; but amended as they were, they scarcely

sufficed at this moment, when not only grief for the dead, but contrition for hours mis-spent, and talents abused, and examples pernicious, was gnawing at his heart. The humiliation of self-debasement bows us low indeed, but is followed by a proportionate elasticity that elevates the depressed and exalts the humble. So was it with the father. The deep contrition of his soul for past abuses was like a potent wash applied to a foul ulcer, its smart indicated health. He rose superior to his feelings, and found, much to his encouragement, that his principles were rooted, and fixed him like a rock, upon which the surges may impetuously vent their force and deluge with their waters, without moving from its position. The heart that wept tears of sincere affection for the dead felt that it was by death, even the death of the Saviour, that the gate of consolation is opened, which discloses to the sons and daughters of affliction a brighter and more glorious prospect beyond the dark valley which bounds this rounded life; and from the consciousness of this, the soul that is probed by the conviction of past offences derives encouragement and hope from the heavenly words which proclaim that

"he who humbleth himself shall be exalted," and that if "we cast ourselves down before God, he will raise us up." Hence the deportment of the father, after the first shock of the interview was over, became affectionate and calm, — affectionate because he felt as a man, and calm because he knew and acknowledged that "the Lord gave," and though he had taken away, yet he felt it was his duty still to bless his name. When, therefore, recovering from the first burst of this interesting interview, he became calm and collected, he was better able to judge how much his son felt, how deeply his grief was rooted, how sorely his affections were afflicted; but whilst he was thankful to see him so alive to feelings of a higher nature, he could not but sigh to think how little there was of principle to regulate those feelings, and direct them to their intended purpose.

"My son," at length he said, "our tears are vain, they only show how much we loved your dear mother. Dear indeed she was, but dearer to me in her death than in her life; since from it, your father, my dear boy, has derived, I might almost say, a new existence. Yes, from her grave there came a voice which crumbled

to kindred ashes my mortality, which paralysed my gross affections, probed into my inmost soul, and there detected 'wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.' The effect of this was a hatred for sin; I became humbled, my soul was bowed down in deep repentance, and gradually, as the darker clouds of contrition passed away, there arose before me the beamings of a purer light. Former objects of pleasure seemed to lose their interest; habits that had grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, like strong fetters impaired by time and corrosion, lost their power to hold me; and in proportion as their influence diminished, (nor was it instantaneous but gradual, and the effect of much labouring and watchfulness,) things that before were tasteless now became pleasing, and duties which once were irksome were now performed not only with readiness but with a degree of satisfaction and comfort, to which I had hitherto been a stranger. This was the Lord's doing, and I will bless his name." Here he paused and looked up towards heaven, then with a look of great composure he continued; — "Yes, my dear boy, your father blushes not to confess even before you his son, that he has recently

begun to live, for he considers not that life which is common to us with the brutes. Your mother's ashes were the embers which, animated by the breath of Heaven, have kindled in my heart a fire, which, though pale and feeble, it is my utmost care and exertion to cherish, that through the grace of God it may at length mount into a flame, and for the sake of others be as much a beacon for good as my former thoughtless conduct was an example for ill. Deeply do I feel the loss of her who was ever the steadfast friend, the faithful partner, even when I did not fully appreciate her virtues; yet, oh! what reason have I to bless that loss, since it has been so sanctified to me. Heaven grant, my boy, that it may be so to you! That it may show you the vanity of earthly things, prove them to be dross, and incline you to 'set your affections on things above,' for there only is our best treasure, our truest friend, our proper home."

Here he paused, and again raised his eyes upwards: his hands were clasped, his lips were eloquent in silence, his heart was communing with heaven; a seraphic hue gleamed over his countenance, and composure settled on his face.

It was the tranquillity of religion, that " peace which the world can neither give nor take away." Like the stilly calmness of a fine evening, it breathed of hope, of rest; and like the calmness of evening, too, its influence was tranquillising; it hushed the more impassioned and fresher tumults of sorrow which agitated the bosom of the son, and reflected over his mind a serenity he had not known before.

Both retired from the interview with feelings chastened by the struggle; the father to his closet, that he might pour forth his soul in prayer to Him from whom alone came his help, and in whom alone he trusted to enable him to " hold fast the beginning of his confidence unto the end;" and the son, wondering at his father's altered and superior demeanour, entertained the thought that even he himself might be improved by affliction, and that " it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting."

CHAP. V.

FAITH AND PRACTICE.

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On the following day Mr. Stanhope and his family were invited to meet the strangers. Of him Mr. Harley had heard much from his friend to win his approbation, and more from the father since his short sojourn at the Hall. He was, therefore, prepared to receive him, not only with politeness, to which all may lay claim, but with that deference which is due to worth in every station of life. The conversation at dinner was cheerful and unrestrained. The Pastor had many enquiries to make respecting college events; and the young Squire had much to tell him, whilst the various topics of the day afforded them ample subjects for conversation, so that it never flagged. By degrees religion became the topic, and absorbed the general attention, to the exclusion of lighter themes. Each, and all of them, had some observation to make, and its effects were in turn eulogised by them all. By

some of them that eulogy was not of words only; the heart was the instrument which made melody on that subject, and required no additional stimulus to tune it to "praise the Lord for his goodness, and the wonders that he doeth among the children of men." Spontaneously the song of thanksgiving rose within it; and though the tongue caught the spirit, and became vocal in the delightful office, it failed to clothe in words the pure harmony which pealed its anthems in the soul. The Squire, who had so lately tasted "how good and pleasant it is to know the Lord," dwelt with great earnestness on the subject, whilst the Pastor, with whom religion had long been a familiar thing, a companion of all his hours, and a part of his existence, spake of it as one who valued it above all treasures. The language of Richard was strained and flighty, whilst that of Mr. Harley was pointed but gloomy. With his praise was mingled a tremulousness of sentiment, which somewhat jarred the melody of the strain, as in a fine-toned instrument a dissonant string mars the harmony of the whole. It might be that early sorrows had imparted a querulousness to his feelings and opinions, which were calculated

rather to excite pity than animadversion; — at least so thought Mr. Stanhope, who, therefore, considered himself called upon to address him in language full of sympathy and encouragement. He knew that his great Master, the pattern of all perfection, who was "made perfect through sufferings," never "brake the bruised reed," but delighted "to heal the broken heart," by pouring the oil and wine of consolation into the wounded soul, and infusing comfort into the drooping spirit. In humble imitation of him he was anxious, on all occasions, not only "to give no offence, that the ministry might not be blamed," but to anticipate the wants of others if he could relieve them; and if not, by sympathising with them, and by displaying the merciful dispensations of God in their true light, to impress upon the mind of the sufferer the consoling assurance, that "our light afflictions are intended to work in us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." By such principles was he now actuated: at one time dwelling on the instability of worldly things, and their unworthiness to engage our attention, when contrasted with the permanency and certainty of heavenly things; at another, dilating on the

gracious promises of God, which encourage us to trust in him, and adducing proofs of the truth that "his long suffering leadeth to repentance." Thus, whilst he weaned the affections of the heart from the idolatry of worldly objects, he lifted them up to the contemplation of spiritual things, of those which ennoble our fallen nature, and give us an existence beyond the bounds of time and space; — an existence which is the home that our souls are made capable of attaining, and which they in their secret longings aspire to; that existence which excludes mortality, and is pregnant with pleasures for evermore, with joys unmixed, delights unalloyed, and habits and occupations of ceaseless praise and harmonious thanksgivings. By considerations such as these, he sought to win Mr. Harley from his "sober sadness," and though he partially succeeded, yet it was but the faint beamings of a transient light, the casual spark from mouldering embers which indicates heat without the power of flame.

The Squire and his son were much interested in the subject; the former felt all the force of the Pastor's observations, which, though he had heard on many previous occasions, had yet all

the point and freshness of an engaging topic newly discussed; and the latter was lost in a maze of thought from which he could not disentangle himself, for he wanted the clue to guide his uncertain steps. When he looked back, he saw only that he had come so far without almost knowing how or why, and when, he cast his glance forward, though he beheld the haven where he would be, he was so doubtful as to the path, that he hesitated and faltered on the way. His feelings were, as usual, excited, and they prompted him to rush forward to catch at the object which had aroused them. He was like a man who, viewing the goal of his pursuit from some elevated situation, fancies that he can reach it at one step, although vallies, rivers, and hills lie between. How common is this in the world! How frequently do they experience this to their chagrin, without, perhaps, being conscious of the reason, who address their preaching and exhortations only to the feelings* of their

* In a little work, entitled "The Spiritual Bee," supposed to have been written by W. Penn, there is the following passage, which seems apposite to this observation:—"The imposture of rhetoric deserves reproof instead of commendation, which works on the affections alone, and not at all on reason or conscience."

hearers, rather than their understanding; or who, in other words, lay their foundation in sand.

It is from such causes that so many professors of Christianity scandalise their profession. They start forward with all the eagerness of excited zeal in the race for heaven, and miss "the mark, in the trial for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," either by blindly rushing out of "the way they should go," or by all at once stopping for want of power to proceed further. A bullet, when sent from a machine, for a short distance, has a great velocity; but when the power which impelled it ceases to operate, it falls deadened and inert; so they who are actuated only by feelings and zeal in their career for heaven, fall away when these excitements fail. They who raise a superstructure upon such false grounds, forget that Christianity is a religion not of feeling but of principle. The doctrines it enforces are addressed to the understanding; the duties it enjoins are submitted to reason. Whilst it aims at the salvation of the soul, it does not neglect either the wants or co-operation of the body. Well, therefore, may it be called "our rea-

sonable service," and well would it be for its professors if they would carefully remember this, and regulate their conduct accordingly. It would cool that overheated furnace which mistaken zeal, like the officers of Nebuchadnezzar, lights for its own destruction; it would also temper their ideas of the Deity. For, whilst religion sets forth in its due importance the mercy of the Most High, it ranges Justice at its side; and whilst it incapacitates man, by his own sole exertions, from coming to heaven, it rouses him to action by trumpeting in his slothful ears, "Work out thine own salvation with fear and trembling." Such is the excellency of "the faith as it is in Jesus," that at one time it "soars to the highest heaven," at another it treads lowly and humbly on the earth; now depressing man to the lowest pit, now elevating him to the sublimest contemplations; now flashing fire from its origin, as on Mount Sinai, and now diffusing heat or cold suited to its object. Nor is this paradox without its solution. The eye of faith pierces through the apparent inconsistency, and beyond the clouds, which seem to involve obscurity and mystery, beholds the throne of Grace, and sees Justice descending from it with a commission to whelm all mankind

in merited displeasure and just punishment, accompanied by the seraph Mercy, who bids the sinner hope, and believe that his Almighty Father's "arm is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear." And between these two cherubs, commissioned to execute their respective missions upon man, the Christian views the Saviour satisfying one, in his own proper person, by suffering the penalty of disobedience, and directing the other, with all the spirit of heavenly love, and ineffable affection, to fulfil the glorious office of "bringing many sons to glory." It is the same view only which can reconcile the several paradoxical attributes and functions of the Redeemer. His two united natures of God and Man display, in their respective operations, actions diametrically opposed to each other. But yet Faith discovers no discrepancy, but rather union, harmony, consistency. From want of this faith, men reject "the God who bought them," and by denying his divinity involve themselves in a mystery far less explicable than the one they profess to deprecate. It is faith only that sees how "the mighty God" became "a man of sorrows;" how "the Prince of Peace gave his back to the

smiters;" how "the Eternal Father" was a child laid in the manger at Bethlehem; how "the only-begotten of his Father" was the son of Mary; how "the Lord of life" poured out his life, and was buried in the earth; and how, among many opposites, He, on whose brows sit the circlet of all dominion and power in heaven and earth, was mocked in mimic majesty with the crown of thorns. But for this view of Him, through Faith, we can by no means reconcile his humility and exaltation, the circumstances of which are parallel one to the other. Thus, though in his passion, crucifixion, death, and burial, he suffered in all humility, under the "form of a servant," yea, even the vilest bond-slave, yet in his resurrection, ascension, glorification, and future coming in glory, he is "exalted far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come." Hence it is that his faith or religion partakes both of the nature of God who gave and of man who received it; and hence its sublimity and lowliness, its certainty and fearfulness, its promises and threatenings; and hence, they who would be true members of it must "use all

diligence to make their calling and election sure." Such were the views which led Mr. Stanhope to direct the attention of his auditors to a rational and serious consideration of religion, reflecting its tempered and holy beamings through the medium of the doctrines and discipline of the Established Church.

As the evening was fine, the home-party proposed to accompany the Pastor and his family in a walk through the village on their way to the parsonage. The beauty, the serenity, the splendour of the scene, were in full unison with the chastened feelings which animated the breasts of all. On their way they met a middle-aged looking woman, whom Mr. Stanhope stopped to talk with. She was decently though poorly clad: the little portion of crape around her bonnet, which was all the exterior mark of mourning she could procure, and which had indeed been given to her by the Pastor's lady, showed that she had lately lost some one bound to her by ties of affection or kindred; whilst the dim sunken eye, the pale cheek, tinged with the yellowness peculiar to mourners, and the faltering step, marked "that within which passeth show." The benevolent minister ad-

dressed her with words of kindness and sympathy, and, among other observations intended to console and comfort her, he directed her to read attentively the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. On turning away from her he told his young friends that Joanna Morgan was greatly stricken with sorrow, which he hoped and believed had been sanctified to her; for though she had wept bitterly and felt poignantly, she looked upon her visitations as the Lord's doing, and meekly, but not without effort, said, "Thy will be done." The substance of the story of this childless widow was this: — she had been left a widow with three daughters, at the early age of five-and-twenty. Her husband, whose morning of life in spite of the good example and lessons of virtuous parents had been marked with viciousness and dissipation, which had undermined his constitution and brought on a debility of habit, fell a victim to the slow but unerring effects of consumption; but not before he had seen the vanity of his former ways, and had felt all the humbling poignancy of conviction that "the end of such things is death." His protracted sufferings were a happy means of grace not unemployed; and many were his expressions of gratitude for such chastisement. Though,

when he reflected upon his sinful practices and past iniquities, his soul melted within him through fear of the justice of his offended God, yet he found some hope of pardon from the atoning merits of his Saviour, who died to save sinners, and who is now in heaven an Advocate with the Father for those who look to him for his intercession and grace. He died bitterly regretting that he had so long abused the riches of his Maker's goodness, which had at length by "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," led him to repentance, which he humbly trusted was not to be repented of. The wages of sin were to him a hard-earned portion, for their effects were not confined to himself. "The sin of the father was visited upon his children." For some years there were no particular signs of this; for Widow Morgan's children were as healthy and good-looking as any of their fellows; yet the canker-worm was consuming the vital springs of life, and the infection of mortality was not waiting for the usual progress and transitions of youth, manhood, and age, gradually to enfeeble and then claim its victims.

Fifteen summers had not shed their sweets since the birth of her first-born, before she

was carried "to the house appointed for all living." Severe was the widow's trial: her eldest child, her Sally, was taken from her: she who was now becoming so useful was gone, and "her place knew her no more." She wept tears of affection, a mother's, a widow's tears. She turned her to her two remaining scions, and fondly hoped that they might escape the blight, and grow up and entwine around her as the tendrils of the vine, at once her ornament and support. When the next spring began to revolve its genial hours, and with a gentle hand to scatter its rich variety of charms upon the re-animated surface of nature, that which called on all around to break the fetters of suspended action, and issue forth to life and joyousness, fell dull upon her Harriet. The rose began to pale upon her cheek; the hue of health, heightened by the freshness of youth and innocence, varied its colours, at one time flushed with deeper dies, at another sicklied over with that almost unearthly pallidness which is too true an index of approaching mortality.

It was on the eve of a fine bright day towards the end of June, that the village-bell pealed its simply solemn tones, and a funeral processio

wound its way up the knoll which gently swelled upwards to the church. They, who had sported so often in youthful buoyancy with her whose dull cold remains they were slowly bearing to the grave, were dressed all in white, emblem of that purity which is the prerogative of youth. Young as they were, and at other times so elastic in spirits, the solemnity of the scene was not without its impression; and they felt, almost without knowing why or wherefore, a suspension of spirits, as the tears trickled down their downy cheeks, like dew-drops glistening on the drooping rose. They were paying the last sad office of friendship to Harriet Morgan. In less than a year she had followed her sister; the same rapid decline had hurried her from the earth; and little Amy was now the widow's only child. She stood alone, an almost childless mother, companioned only by a slender sapling, which every wind shook, and every tempest threatened. Deep was the grief which bowed her head in almost moping sadness, and hard was the struggle which she made to rally her drooping spirits, when she remembered that one yet remained to claim her support and need her care. How varied

were her feelings, how opposite, how trying. One, only one now: in less than one year, two dear children had been taken from her; this was grief, this was affliction: but one yet remained; this was hope, this was comfort. What if that one should also be called? This was doubt, this was despondency. But she had now an inward strength: past afflictions had brought with them one blessed advantage, and from the page of inspiration she derived that lesson which gives the hope, convinces and proclaims, that the beloved in life shall meet again. This was her rock of defence, this was her stedfast trust. Well was it for her that her trials had been sanctified, well for her that she had been convinced of the vanity of this world, and the uncertainty of all that is in it; and well for her that her affections were raised to a communion with higher things, and her hopes of happiness built on a "foundation, the corner-stone of which is Jesus Christ;" for now her own health fled, sickness came over her. The long watching, her unwearied attention to her child, the bruised spirit, all conspired to shake her mortal tenement, and threaten it with a fall. Many weeks in the

depth of winter she kept her bed; and though at times her spirits drooped, and her mind wavered in despondency, yet her well-regulated trust in God would cheer her up, and the reading, the exhortations, the prayers of Mr. Stanhope would renovate her heart, which thus, through God's grace, "was made to rejoice all the day long." The attentions of her orphan were unremitted. She would sit by her and read portions of the Psalms, or passages out of some of the little books which she had received as rewards of good conduct in the Sunday-school. She would repeat to her, on the Lord's day, the collect, and read, as well as she was able, the various portions of Scripture appointed for the service of the day. Night and morning, on her bended knees, with her little hands clasped and head meekly bent, she would address to her Father in heaven her humble prayers, in which she never forgot to ask a blessing for her mother. At length the widow's health was restored, and her little cottage again began to smile. Alas! how fallacious are the smiles of mortality!

Autumn, with its brown foliage, had commenced. The harvest from its horn of plenty

was pouring forth its ripened luxuriance. Each cottage sent forth its inmates to the reapened fields, or, as Bloomfield has expressed it,

"Th' unpeopled dwelling mourns its tenants stray'd."

Many a Ruth brought home her treasured burden, and among the rest the widow and her daughter. Of such as these the same sweet poet, in his native woodland notes, has said,

"No rake takes here what Heaven to all bestows;
"Children of want, for you the bounty flows!
"And every cottage, from the plenteous store,
"Receives a burden nightly at its door."

They were industriously striving to lay up a small stock against the approaching winter; and who so cheerfully or so actively picked up the straggling ear, or who so gratefully acknowleged the blessing, as Joanna and little Amy? One evening, as they were returning from a distant field, loaded with the fruits of their application and labour, they were overtaken by a storm, and reached their humble home drenched with rain. The shiverings of Amy during the night, her involuntary starts, her hectic flush-

ings, indicated a severe cold, from which, however, she soon in a great measure recovered; yet there still lingered a short teasing cough, and, without any apparently active cause, she gradually lost her strength. Seldom was she now seen out of doors, and no longer could she go to the Sunday-school, where she had so often been distinguished for her attention, and held up as a pattern for her cleanly appearance and general good conduct. She felt this deprivation very much; but it was somewhat alleviated by the kindness of Mr. Stanhope, who would call at the cottage and sit and talk with the little maiden, and prescribe her short prayers or pious ejaculations to get off against his next visit, and encourage her still to "remember her Creator in the days of her youth." In these visitations he had an eye also to the preparing of the widow against another shock, more trying than before, which in his opinion was likely to come upon her. She listened attentively to all his observations, and felt comforted by his ministration. But she could not see that her child was drooping. Affection blinded her to the change which was gradually coming over her; and it was not till the sunken eye, the swelled

leg, the uneasy sensation of lying down, revealed the dreadful truth. She had fondly hoped that warmer weather would restore her child to health; the warmer weather returned, but came unaccompanied by health. Though she must have learned bitter experience from the cases of her two older girls, yet so fearful was she to lose the only one remaining, that she did not dare admit or forebode that the sickness which affected her last scion would be fatal. This may seem strange; but the heart which loves intensely is the last to suspect, much less to confess the truth which it most fears, however manifest it may be to the stranger or less interested. We cling to hope contrary to reason, and beyond hope. Mournful is such tenacity, and blighting, withering, paralysing is the conviction which succeeds it. With what an aching pulsation of the heart was the unwilling truth at length acknowledged by Joanna. It came over her as the tempest, that has long been gathering, and given timely notice to others to seek for shelter, bursts over some houseless common upon one whose attention has been engrossed by an interesting object. Already she felt herself alone, the last of her family; she, who had not

known a father's care, her Amy, to whom she had performed the double office of both parents, now drooped like some delicate flower, nipped in its earliest bud. She felt herself like Rachel, "weeping for her children, for they were not." Six weeks had passed since conviction of the approaching dissolution of her child had turned her heart to awakened and deeper sorrow. She was the unwearied nurse: both day and night she watched her child, anticipated her wants, soothed her sufferings, and, though her own heart was ready to burst, she would talk to her calmly and dispassionately. The little girl also would converse with her about her angel-sisters, and be delighted with the hope of being an angel with them. She would talk about

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,"

and would be continually repeating, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and when the teasing of her cough, or the oppressiveness of overloaded lungs, afflicted her, the only complaint was a low plaintive "Oh, dear!" uttered in a tone which seemed unwillingly expressed, but which vibrated on the chords of

the widow's heart, already too finely attuned to mournful anticipations. How oft, as the languid head of her daughter rested against her bosom, would she press the pale cheek of the sufferer with her parched and withered lips, and then, raising her eyes, filled with the heart's holiest dew, towards heaven, implore a blessing on her child, in some short petition, dictated by a mother's love. And if her emotions sometimes betrayed her by tears, little Amy would ask her why she wept, as she could not imagine that her mother's grief was on her account; for she had frequently told her daughter, that she was going to heaven, which is a much better place than earth. So truly "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings is strength ordained." So much are the feelings of nature, clinging to the dust, opposed to those better longings and higher convictions of the soul which aspire to immortality. At length "the silver cord was loosed, and the golden bowl broken." The Village Pastor was there, by his presence comforting the mother, and giving assurance to the child, as the pains of death came over her, of a joyful passage to another and a better world. No longer could the little sufferer bear to re-

cline against the bolstered pillow, or be supported on her mother's knees: her head was lying heavy on the bed; her eyes, now turning alternately from her mother to the Pastor, and from him towards heaven, were dull and glazed; her countenance, which had before been marble cold, now seemed lighted up with a beaming glow, like the last and fairest flush of evening; and as the minister pronounced the concluding words of that heavenly blessing appointed by the Church in the ministration of the service of the sick, the spirit fled, but not before a faint smile of recognition announced to the childless widow, and the benevolent Pastor, the hope, the assurance, that "Sister-spirit, come away!" was sung and answered by one as pure as ere had tenanted an earthly fabric. After gazing awhile at the now lifeless body, Mr. Stanhope knelt down and prayed; he was responded to by the deep-drawn sigh and fervent amen of this second Rachel. He gave her such words of consolation as the occasion called forth, warm from the heart "that felt another's woe," and animated by the truths which bid the Christian mourn as those "who have a hope." He then returned to his own home, musing as

he went, in that calm and tranquil train of thought which a scene of mortality cannot fail to body forth to those, who, knowing themselves dust, shrink from the thought of death, yet feeling that they have within them a spark of divinity, the salvation of which cost the Son of God his blood, cast their views beyond this world, and anchoring them on faith in Jesus, "labour to make their calling and election sure."

CHAP. VI.

FEELINGS.

FEELINGS.

A FEW days after the meeting at the Hall, the young Squire, attended by Mr. Harley, paid a morning-visit to the parsonage, and were received by the family with all the heartiness of frank and unreserved cordiality. They had, by the way, met with an occurrence which had engaged their attention, and afforded them a leading topic of conversation to communicate to the Pastor. The parsonage was about a quarter of a mile from the Hall; one part of the road was a pleasant lane, hollowed below the surface of the adjoining country, and thickly skirted with various kinds of shrubs and trees, which yielded a delightful shade in hot weather. This lane was a favourite place of resort in the estimation of the village-swains and maidens on all occasions of gala finery, or seasons of extraordinary bustle, for it was the road in which all accesses and departures from the village were concentered. In this lane, as the

two young men were proceeding on their way to the parsonage, they beheld a man supporting himself with difficulty by leaning against the bank; his long hair wantoned in the summer-breeze; his eye was sunk and glazed, his face was sallow and indented with the furrows of mental anguish; his posture was depending, and his whole appearance depicted misery and lassitude. Yet there was an air, amid all this abjectness, that bespoke an aptitude for better things: he seemed no ordinary outcast, no common pauper, no vulgar mendicant. His extreme feebleness at first arrested their notice, which a closer inspection heightened into interest.

"Old man," said the young Squire, "you seem weak and faint; who are you? whither are you going?"

"I am a man, and therefore wretched; a mortal, and therefore travelling to the grave," was the reply.

Struck by an answer so unusual, and rivetted at once by the wildness of his manner, and the strangeness of his tone, the two friends became more anxious to know more of him, and render him assistance.

"Pardon my question," replied the Squire, "it was not put from any vain curiosity; my only motive was to know how I might assist you. Tell me, therefore, can I do any thing for you? You seem enfeebled, and unable to proceed; permit me to have you conveyed to some house, where your weariness may be rested, and your wants relieved."

"Rested and relieved, said you? weariness and wants! never, never! never can such things be: — but, kind young man, conduct me whither you will, so that I may die beneath a roof, shut out from beholding the splendour of that sun, which in its universal diffusion of light and influence represents the mercy and goodness of its Maker, shining upon me, as its beams fall upon corruption. Dispose of me as you think fit, only keep me from vulgar observation, for I would die in darkness and seclusion."

On hearing this the young Squire beckoned to a man at a little distance who was driving a market-cart, and who readily obeyed the summons: in this they conveyed the wretched stranger to a neighbouring cottage, in which, after engaging to remunerate the owner for his attention and accommodation, they left

him, with the promise of calling again in the course of the day. On considering the uncommon circumstances which seemed attached to this miserable stranger, they could not but conclude from his appearance and language that he was some one who had possessed a cultivated understanding, and who had at some time moved in a sphere very different from the one in which he was now placed. They thought it also more than probable that he was suffering under some strong excitement of mental anguish, perhaps under an aberration of reason. A detail of this occurrence they gave to the Village Pastor; who listened to it with all the attention of a man whose heart, from a sense of duty, is ever open to the impressions of sympathy; and of whom it might be said, in the language of Goldsmith,

"Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride."

The young Squire, upon whose feelings such an event could not but operate very forcibly, gave vent to them in schemes and conjectures respecting the stranger in a manner that afforded the good Pastor an opportunity of conveying to him a lesson, which had for its

object the tempering of that disposition, which through lack of proper regulation too frequently betrays itself into vice and profligacy, but which, when directed by reason and religion, presents the operation of a mind replete with Christian charity. "My young friend," he observed, "much though I admire that readiness which ever prompts you to be forward in rendering assistance to a fellow-creature in distress, I must, nevertheless, claim the indulgence of one who has known you from a child, and who has been called upon to minister spiritual comfort to both your parents, whilst I blame your precipitancy of fancy which regards not circumstances, and caution you against the enthusiasm of your feelings. You are their slave. Excuse the strong expression. But let me ask you, even in the case of this man, whom I certainly intend to visit in your company, were you not induced to extend to him your ready assistance by the instigation of a warmth which prevented your asking yourself the necessary question, whether the person was deserving your attention and pity? And whether your mode of assistance, and the conjectures you have since hazarded, were such as to be most serviceable to

him? Were you not moved more by the uncommonness of his language than by his lowly and wretched appearance, to stretch your aid beyond what you would have done to an ordinary mortal? And why? Was it because you saw a fellow-creature in distress, and remembered that they 'who clothe the naked, and offer even a cup of cold water to a disciple of Jesus in the name of the Lord,' have their reward in heaven, that you were so prompt to be the good Samaritan, and perform an action in humble imitation of him 'who went about doing good?' Was the love of God the motive of your charity to one of his creatures? Or was it the impetus of a sensation excited by an appearance of wretchedness, that instigated your active benevolence? But I will not sift your motives, which I dare say were disinterested; and though, perhaps, self was the pleader that applied the case to your own feelings, you were not conscious of any other gratification than the comfort which your ready assistance might confer upon the object of your pity. I know your heart; it is susceptible of impressions of the best and most exalted nature; but it is also, from the greatness of its susceptibility, liable to impres-

sions of a contrary kind. Thus your generosity is in danger of rushing into extravagance, your charity into licentiousness, and your religion into fanaticism. To say nothing of your benevolence this morning, which I cannot but commend, I must counsel you to keep under the control of reason and principle the high schemes and conjectures you have since hazarded; for I have seen in the world those who would have been equally alert with yourself in pitying such apparent wretchedness, but who, at the same time, from an excitation of false impressions made by an artful tale, or formed by an inconsiderate judgment under the direction of their feelings, would have been as prompt in inflicting misery. If you would call to mind the many inconsistencies of which, I am sure, you have at times been guilty, you will find an easy solution of them, by tracing the current of your feelings to the fountain from which they diversely were drawn."

Mr. Harley here cast a look full of expression at his friend, which seemed to say he has touched upon the string from which vibrate all your virtues as well as follies.

"Have you never," continued the Pastor,

"been engaged in deeds which in their performance appeared right and interesting, but which when completed have worn a different aspect? Have you never been surprised and abashed to find yourself engaged precipitately in measures, which your cooler reason condemned? Have you not been hurried by your feelings to participate in enterprises for the correction of what you fancied evils, which you were at the very time committing in yourself? Such, at least, I know, is the case with those whose feelings are their masters. They are like ships which, from carrying too much sail, are lost in the storm, and thus that which, under proper management, is a powerful auxiliary and an essential equipment, from its abuse becomes the means of ruin."

"I have some reason," observed Mr. Harley, "to believe your observations correct. I have seen such examples, and experienced the truth of your remarks in my own actions."

"And I," said the young Squire, with all the ingenuousness of his warm temperament, "I am a living exposition of this. I have long deplored my instability, and knew not to what I could attribute it, because I had always

thought that feelings were given us for noble purposes, and I had frequently heard the expression, 'He is a man of fine feelings,' or, 'He is a feeling man,' not only as a commendation, but as a kind of salvo for his other faults."

"Nothing could more forcibly support the lesson I wish to inculcate than that very expression which has misled you, that very quality which, overstrained as it generally is in characters of this kind, is their bane, and I dare say that their failings, yea, their vices, if properly traced, will be found, nine times out of ten, to originate in their feelings. I have seen so many instances of this kind in the world, that I am always anxious to caution my young friends, especially those who are of a warm temperament, against the impulse of their feelings, fearful lest what is one great ornament of our nature should prove its bane. The late Lord Byron is a strong instance of this: — I only name him as a beacon to others; and whilst I point out the rock on which he split, I would throw the veil over his failings, and lament his untimely end. Need I mention a name also which is synonymous with every thing cruel and base, that of Nero, of whom it is said, that his feelings were so fine that when

the first death-warrant was presented to him for his signature, bursting into tears, he said, 'Would to heaven I had never learned to write?' Let no one, therefore, adduce the acuteness of his feelings as an extenuation for his want of principle, for, in the estimation of the rational, such excuses but aggravate follies."

"I see the force of your observations," replied the young Squire, "and feel them too; and I think I can mention a case in point, that now rises on my recollection more strongly than it ever did before.

"I was spending one of my vacations with a college-friend, in town, when one morning he came to me in a state of great agitation, telling me that he had been most grossly insulted by a gentleman, who had violated his friendship and treated him most shamefully; 'so much so,' added he, 'that I am bound by honour, come what may, to call him out; and so, my dear Dick, I expect you to make every arrangement for me.' I was roused with the idea of his being wronged, and entered at once into his passionate and irreligious views."—"Excuse my interruption," said the Pastor, "there is a sentiment beautifully expressed by Dean Addison,

in his little tract on the Sacrament, which I would recommend to the perusal of you both, and which is very frequently a pocket-manual with me," drawing it at the same time from his side-pocket, and reading as follows: — "Charity and meekness are more noble and worthy than impatience, or even valour itself. The tops of those mountains, which are above the clouds, are not beaten with hail and rain; and spirits, truly high and generous, are above the insolencies of unadvised persons, and enjoy serenity and a calm during such tempests."

"Goldsmith has expressed nearly the same sentiment in four beautiful lines, which, in my opinion, are almost unequalled in any language," observed Mr. Harley: —

"'As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and mid-way meets the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.'"

"But proceed," said the Pastor, addressing himself to the young Squire, who thus conti-

nued:—"The meeting took place, but nothing dangerous was done; for, on re-considering the cause of the quarrel, the other second, as well as myself, thought we ought not to allow them to come to extremities; and I was really ashamed and abashed to think that I might have been instrumental in risking the eternal welfare of two immortal souls."—"You considered it in its true light," observed the Pastor, "for duelling is murder. However fashion may foster, and human pride may abet, duelling stands repugnant to the will and commands of God, which not only forbid evil and malignant actions, but even revengeful and avenging thoughts. If to lust after a woman with the eyes only be adultery in heart, how shall this action escape the crime of murder? Consider that duels generally originate in a wilful breach of duty, rarely in the performance of it. The foundation, therefore, of this fashionable but shocking practice, is laid in some vice, its progress is marked by the blackest passions, and its object, whatever be its issue, is death. Is it not, therefore, murder aggravated by additional crimes, which in themselves would embitter the peace of a well regulated mind? How, then, shall it escape 'the

just judgment of an offended God?' The man who commits murder on the high road is a more respectable character than the duellist; and, whatever distinction human laws may make between them, Divine justice can see none. But proceed, what was the cause of quarrel?"

"They had quarrelled at the theatre respecting a frail sister; and, for so unworthy a subject, they were ready to send each other

> "'To his great account,
> With all his imperfections on his head.'"

"Did I not say," remarked the Pastor, "that duels generally originated in a breach of duty? The omission of one duty leads to another, and the commission of one vice is followed by a greater. See what a catalogue of crimes your friend had heaped together, — adultery, rage, murder! But what followed?"

"Need I say," continued the young man, "that instead of mutually aiming at each other's life, we made them interchange the pledge of satisfaction; and, having shaken hands, all left the place together, as if nothing of so momentous a risk as the endangering of two rational beings in the crime of murder had been at stake. On our

way we were met by a mutual friend, who so deeply interested our feelings with the prospect of a meeting to be held that day for promoting the conversion of the Jews, that we were easily prevailed upon to promise to accompany him. I caught the influence of the feeling which pervades such assemblies, and rendered myself conspicuous, when I heard stated, in rapturous language, the blessings of Christianity, and the mildness of its spirit, when contrasted with the heavy yoke, and almost malignant disposition, of Judaism. In the account of that day's proceedings honourable and flattering mention was made of myself and friend, as being two young men filled with the milk of human kindness, and animated by a truly Christian spirit. Yet even then, without altogether divining the cause, I was not quite satisfied with myself, and a cloud seemed to hang over and dim the bright vision which my feelings had conjured up on that occasion."

"And well it might," said the Pastor; "for, laying aside the expediency or non-expediency of the object of such meetings, advocacy like yours must injure and prejudice their utility in the estimation of those for whose benefit they

are convened. The desire of bringing all to the faith of Jesus, and particularly those who were once God's favoured people, is indeed an evidence of the benevolent spirit of the Gospel. But to me it seems an hopeless case, humanly speaking, to expect that much, or any good, should be done so long as the lives and morals of professing Christians are at such variance with their faith. May not the Jews allege, that their law teaches them a belief in the one true God, and enforces the necessity of a strict morality? 'which things, if they observe, they shall live by them.' In vain will you urge that these were to be abrogated when Shiloh came; and that as he now is come, they are superseded by a law more pure, and a faith more divine; — because they may say, 'Show us the effect of such law and faith upon your actions, and we will believe. Buffeted as we are, and compelled, not merely from the letter of our law, but in our own defence, to "exact an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," we do not see that you, with all the boasted mildness and purity of your faith, are any better as a people than we are. We see thousands of you paying your lives a forfeit to the injured laws of your country; we

see thousands living on the spoils of others; we see thousands deriving their support by an open violation of positive commands; we see dissensions in religion multiplied among you to an almost countless number; and we see the different members of these many dissensions envying, mocking, persecuting each other. We, on the contrary, though scattered over the face of the earth, and called a race of vagabonds, are one and united, have the same faith, the same doctrine; and few, very few of us, in comparison with our disadvantages, ever come to the gallows. To what, then, would ye convert us? You would make us, as your pretended Messiah said, "tenfold more the children of the devil;" you would have us exchange the birth-right of our father Jacob for the outcast condition of a profligate Esau.' I fear that such observations are made, and with too much truth. Witness your own conduct. In the morning you are hurried by the impulse of your feelings to participate in an act abhorrent in the sight of God, abhorrent from the Gospel of Jesus, prejudicial to the peace of society, at enmity with the laws of your country, and in strict unison with the nature of devils. And in the evening, you

associate with those who are endeavouring to convert the Jews to a faith, which your own conduct had just scandalised. ' Both these were from your feelings, of which I might say in the language of St. James, ' Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?' "

" But would you, then," said Mr. Harley, who had been an attentive listener to the Pastor's observations, " would you proscribe all attempts at conversion of those who are not Christians? Do you deprecate them altogether?"

" I must confess," replied the Pastor, " that I despair of producing a proportionate sum of good among them, so long as they witness so many examples of profligacy, of vice, in all ranks of society. Sabbaths turned into days of pleasure and parade; religion prostituted to a kind of popular preaching; adultery nestling in halls and mansions; duelling fostered among the high and cultivated; gaming practised by both sexes; and drunkenness, thefts, and murders among the mass; are not favourable evidences to which to appeal as inducements for those among whom many of these things are scarcely known, to leave their present modes of belief,

or influence the Jews to abandon the law of their forefathers. When you have reclaimed 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' that is, Christianised Christendom, then may you hope to convert the Hebrews, and bring heathens to the light of the Gospel really and effectually. And though much of this, particularly in the case of the Jews, must necessarily depend upon some interference of the Most High, in a way best known to his infinite and gracious wisdom, yet the *universal* practice of the faith of Jesus by those who bear his name, seems to me, of all human means, the best preparative for an expansion and diffusion of the blessings of the Gospel 'to those who sit in darkness.' I, for one, entirely dissent from those who, in their zeal for the honour of the Gospel, and for its introduction into heathen lands, assert that there is no salvation for them so long as they remain unconverted. This is, in my opinion, assuming a position unwarranted by Scripture, and repugnant to the attributes of God. 'In Adam *all* die, in Christ shall *all* be made alive,' is the tenor of the Gospel dispensation; by which we learn that the satisfaction for sin made by the Saviour extends as far as the original taint con-

tracted by Adam; and if the account Moses gives of the origin of the human race be correct, then all the millions who people the earth are his descendants and involved in the penalty of his fall; but the Apostle's analogy would seem imperfect if the influence of the atonement were not co-extensive. Besides, we are told that 'the Gentiles are a law unto themselves, and do by nature the things contained in the law.' Does this prove that they are utterly excluded from the family of heaven, without any opportunity of coming thither? Rather, I should think, the contrary. And as they are as much as ourselves children of Adam, I apprehend they have as great an interest, passively, in the atonement of the Saviour, and as true a hope in his mediation, proportionate to their several talents, as we have. We, like them, are dead in sin without 'the blood of Jesus;' but as that blood has been shed, and the oracles of God assert, shed for the sins of the whole world, who shall say that it was not shed for them as much as for us? And as the Holy Spirit is the invisible representative of the Saviour, who shall say that his operation is not co-extensive with the influence of the Redeemer's blood?"

"What advantage, then, is it to be a Christian?" enquired the young man.

"Much every way, as the Apostle asserts of the pre-eminency of the Jews; and for the same reason, 'chiefly because unto them are committed the oracles of God.' Our path of duty is marked out so plainly, that they who run may read: it is recorded in the Word of God, whilst theirs depends upon their conscience, 'which bears witness, and their thoughts accuse or else excuse one another.' Very limited, therefore, are their advantages, even much less to the wisest and most enlightened among them than to the lowest and most ignorant among Christians. But still, I think, they do derive sufficient benefit from the Saviour's death to raise them from their fallen state to a condition in which, by employing their talents as far as they are able, salvation may be obtained. The effect wrought upon their hearts by the operation of the Holy Spirit is an act of which they are not conscious, and a gift bestowed on them only for the sake of Jesus Christ, who is said to have come to 'lighten every one that cometh into the world,' to be the Saviour both of Jew and Gentile, and to have died for the sins of all the world.

Neither must we forget, that, as the son of David, Jesus Christ is both of the Jew and Gentile stock, for David was descended from Ruth, a daughter of Moab. This fact intimates to us, that all mankind, whatever their country, kind, or colour, have an equal interest passively in the atoning blood of Jesus. But we are told that there is 'no other name under heaven given to man by which he can be saved but that of Christ Jesus,' and our Church has adopted this doctrine in Article 18. No point can be clearer than this, that 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified,' is the only propitiation for sin; for, if he had not come and suffered, all must have perished, without the possibility of a remedy. It is his atonement so great, so precious, so universal, which makes me judge that despite is done to it by supposing it limited, as an antidote of original sin, to those only who profess his faith. And in the beginning of the thirty-first Article, the Church asserts: 'The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the *whole* world, both original and actual! Besides, the extension of its influence to *all* is most consonant with the plain declarations of

the Word of God; and hence it is that we are enabled to join in that confession made by St. Peter, under the full inspiration of the Holy Spirit: 'Of a truth, God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.' And holding this opinion, I must differ from those over-zealous advocates of heathen proselytism, who endeavour to enlist to their side the feelings of men, by representing heathens as given up to absolute perdition, unless converted to the faith of Jesus. Do not, however, misunderstand me. God forbid that I should show myself an enemy to those munificent and splendid acts of national piety and public charity, which such attempts abstractedly exhibit! It is to the worldliness and improper agency employed that I object, for, so long as the unclean thing is among us, so long as human vanities and human corruptions are pandered to the cause of God, as it is called, and human frailties pampered, as they manifestly are, in such meetings, I must for one, and there are many who think as I do, though reluctantly, declare my belief, that their results cannot be commensurate with their exertions or desires. I rather

admire the operation of that ' zeal according to knowledge' manifested by the Society of our Church, maligned and neglected as it is, which, whatever may be the pretensions of others, must still be considered as anterior to all of them, and the parent of all that is good and useful in them, and which unostentatiously, without the tinsel of art, and the fomentation of unworthy excitations, works on in the cause of God, with that prudent, tempered, and measured caution, which suits the times, and is consistent with the spirit ever shown by the Establishment, fostered and founded as it is in the example of Jesus, and declared and exemplified in his Gospel.

" If I might offer one word of advice on this subject, I would humbly submit to the serious consideration of the active and zealous advocates for popular meetings, which enlist human vanities to the cause of religion, the words of our blessed Saviour, ' First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.'"

There was something in the Pastor's manner at once so impressive and humble, that Mr. Harley, who, on these subjects, had seldom met

with any superior to himself, found it prudent to be silent, which Mr. Stanhope, whose aim was to convince and instruct rather than confute and mortify, observing, proposed, after they had taken some refreshment, a visit to the wretched stranger.

CHAP. VII.

THE STRANGER.

THE STRANGER.

They were proceeding over some fields which skirted the village, by a path leading to the cottage in which was left the wretched stranger, when their attention was arrested by the enlivening appearance of the country, clad in all the richness of harvest just begun. On one hand the wheat waved its luxuriant ears, like some rich argosies undulating on the surface of the ocean, and adjoining it shocks of reapened corn were marshalled as in battle-array. The face of nature was glowing in all the mellowed variety of fresh autumn; the birds were tuneful, some in the air, at heaven's gate singing, others deep darkling in the thickened branches, and others sporting on the ground. Every thing spake of animation and life. They paused to contemplate the pleasing scene, when the Pastor seized the opportunity of descanting on the gracious providence of God, from which it

comes that "the vallies stand so thick with corn that they laugh and sing," and concluded with that exclamation of the Psalmist, "Oh, that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and the wonders that he doeth to the children of men." He then drew a paper from his pocket, which he had prepared in anticipation of so enlivening a scene, and read to them the following

HARVEST HYMN.

Oh God of harvests! Thou, whose bounteous hand
Diffuses blessings o'er each favour'd land,
Indulgent hear, our humble voices raise,
Pardon our weakness, and accept our praise.
At thy command the raging storms increase,
And jarring elements subside in peace;
From thee proceed all blessings mortals know,
Immortal soother of our earthly woe!
Where'er we turn, thy goodness we survey
Far as the sun extends his genial ray,
From which the teeming earth its increase yields,
And plenty decks our cultivated fields.
Fruitless our toil, and all our hopes how vain!
If thou support not the implanted grain,

Which dying lives; and soon thy power is seen
In many a springing blade and floweret green:
Emblem of mortals sleeping in the dust,
Who, when the Saviour comes to call the just,
Shall rise triumphant to the realms above,
To reap the harvest of redeeming love.
Oh, Power Supreme! thy mercies still bestow;
Elate us nor too high, nor sink too low,
Lest in our pride we take thy name in vain,
Or in our wants thy providence arraign.

On their arrival at the cottage they found the stranger asleep, if that can be called sleep which is attended with frequent involuntary shrinkings and irregular starts, with tossings of the limbs, and heavings of the breast, with variations of the countenance and deep-drawn groanings, and which is shaken off like a heavy pressure by a convulsive movement that indicates horror and dismay. They all advanced cautiously to his bedside, when the young men had an opportunity of witnessing the workings of a guilty conscience, the gnawings of "the worm that dieth not," depicted on the reflex of the mind, "the human face divine," even when the other senses are lulled to cessation, and bound, as it were, in oblivious imprisonment.

He was altogether an object different from any which had come under the Pastor's observation, accustomed as he had been, from his undeviating habit of visiting his parishioners, not only when sent for, but at other opportunities, to behold the many varieties of characters which had come under his ministration, as well of suffering wretchedness and mental disquietude as of patient triumph and spiritual confidence. He never had witnessed the effects of the goad within so visibly and so horridly engraven on the outer man, as on this occasion. "Nature's soft nurse" seemed to be converted into some avenging demon, and the soothing influence of bed into the torturings of refined cruelty; haggardness sat scowling on his forehead, and remorse and bitterness were lodged in the furrows of an emaciated and indented countenance. With a start of horror he awoke from his unnatural repose, and with one hand raised, as if to wipe away the cold clammy drops of sweat which were stagnant on his face, and with his other grasping the bed-clothes, like a wrecked and exhausted mariner snatching at a piece of floating sea-weed, as if to assure himself that he was not carried away, he darted a look of

fearful frenzy upwards, then more deliberately on the objects around. He would have spoken had he not beheld, in company with the young men, an elder personage, whose meek looks and clerical dress declared his office; he turned away his gaze from them, and seemed lost in horrid vacuity: the young men shuddered as they looked upon him with varied feelings. Mr. Harley contrasted this scene of disquietude and mental anguish with that of placidity and resignation, which had marked the death-bed of his father, whilst the young Squire shrunk from it, as afraid to look upon mortality. At length after a short pause, the Pastor addressed him: "You seem much disturbed, Sir; is there any thing which, either in my duty as a minister, or in my services as a man, I can do for you?" The stranger continued silent. "This is the minister of the parish," said the young Squire, who had now recovered from his stupor; "he will be glad to be useful to you in any thing you may want; for in the discharge of his sacred duties he is ever ready; and my father, the squire of this place, makes him his almoner, so that you have only to speak your wishes, and, as far as they are reasonable and proper,

you may depend upon having them satisfied." The only reply to these kind and encouraging addresses was a look of louring sullenness and discontented struggling. "Let us withdraw a little," whispered the Pastor to his young friends, and accordingly they were turning for that purpose, when the stranger started up, and with vehement fearfulness called out, "Oh! leave me not." The tone, the manner, the suddenness of the appeal indicated great terror. "We came," replied the Pastor, with great calmness and meekness, "to offer our services to you; we beg, therefore, you will use them as they may be most useful to you. If it is your desire, we will remain with you." The stranger seemed by this a little more composed, and the dark lourings of his countenance admitted a brighter ray; as when the heavens are clothed with blackness, an evanescent beaming of the sun sometimes irradiates the welkin, and indicates that the clouds shall pass away. Mr. Stanhope now drew a chair nearer to the bed; and when seated, with an air of benignity that as it fell seemed to dissipate in some degree the harshness of the stranger, said, "Allow me, Sir, in the first place, to offer you what I

consider your present condition requires," — at the same time drawing from his pocket a portable flask, from which he poured out a small quantity of wine into a glass, which one of his young friends handed to him from a table in the room. The stranger received it with a slight inclination of the head, and raising it to his lips without tasting it burst into a convulsive laugh, uttering, "Wine, glorious wine!" — then greedily swallowing the contents, he returned the glass to Mr. Stanhope. In a little time there was a change in the appearance of the stranger, whose expression of countenance became less hysterical, and subsided into an approach of calmness. Observing this, the Pastor again repeated his offers of service, adding that he was more than ever anxious to relieve him. "I thank you," replied the stranger, "but your benevolent offer is too late, whether I regard this or the other world; the sand of my glass is almost run, — the vengeance of my crimes is nearly completed, and death is ready to seize upon me." Here he shuddered, and a paleness glanced over his haggard face. — "I have long," he continued, "been a stranger to such as you; — your benevolence recalls to

my mind associations of former days, which have long slept beneath the rubbish of rankest weeds, but which now seem to rise before me, only to rake up the remembrance of deeds which I would fain forget, but which still cling to me, and haunt me with never-ceasing malevolence. They drag me down,—my strength is stricken,—my spirit broken. How then can I hope for life? or what is life to one who feels bitterly that it would have been better for him never to have been? Oh why was I born? or why, being born, was I made, in spite of myself, to bear with me in the world this sting within me, which lashes like a fury?"

An avowal like this could not but startle the inexperienced and sensitive minds of the young friends, yet it is the language of scepticism; and, perchance, fashion may somewhat warrant it. *Lord Byron*, in one of his wayward sketches, makes the same confession, when he says,

"'Tis something better not to be,"

which is, to say the least, an ungrateful and querulous acknowlegement, that no Christian mind can entertain, much less avow. They,

indeed, whose hopes are confined to this transitory scene, and whose views are bounded by that horizon on which

> "Shadows, clouds, and darkness rest,"

may with some appearance of sincerity, and, if they have not opportunities of knowing better, without blame, confess that non-existence is preferable to that which is loaded with sufferings and afflictions. Such excuse may be found for those who are called heathens, and exculpates Sophocles, who puts into the mouth of one of his choruses, "not to be is heaven's best gift." His views were necessarily limited; and the notion of futurity was with him rather poetical than real, rather an object of surmise than belief. Guided by the light of nature alone he could not possibly arrive at any definite conclusion; for, the moral world was dark; a heavy blackness hung over human existence, which the eye of reason could notpenetrate. But now that "the sun of righteousness has arisen," the gloom is dissipated, and nothing but pride of spirit or hardness of heart can induce any of the present age to level their

notions of the divine economy to those entertained by men "who sat in darkness," but who, (had "the light shined on them,") would probably, like a Boyle, a Newton, or a Locke, have devoted the free exercise of their powerful minds to the furtherance of that Gospel "which is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness." No wonder then, that the young men were astounded at this impiety, and shrunk from the unholy gaze which accompanied it, whilst the unhappy man continued in a somewhat softened tone, but dejected look. "But my fates are sealed, and since they are so, it is no fault of mine, that I am wretched. All that I ask of you, kind sirs, is that you will keep me from vulgar observation, and that for the little space which I have yet to breathe, you will afford me shelter. There are, perhaps, who would not refuse to pay you thanks, and refund —— But no matter, I rely upon your assistance; little will suffice me now, for Fate claims, and I must go."

Again he appeared exhausted, and Mr. Stanhope offered him the remainder of the wine, which he readily accepted, and having looked stedfastly at it, and said, "Oft have I sought

pleasure from thy intoxicating draught; now I take thee as thy Giver intended," he drank it off. Then with renewed strength he resumed his broken conversation: "I have claimed your assistance, as if I had a right to it, forgetting how many better and more deserving objects of your charity there may be now needing your services."

"Be this as it may," replied the Pastor, "I beg to assure you, that you have only to command our help, and it is yours."

"I thank you, truly thank you, and would fain deal candidly with you; but I cannot, dare not. The only help I require now is a little support for this brief space of life; when eternal sleep possesses me, I shall be no more; to dust, out of which you say we were made, I shall crumble away, and every thing then will perish which once formed that lump of misery—myself." He stopped abruptly before the last word, as if to recal what had nearly escaped from him, his name,—Charles Longdale. However hardened in guilt, there was still a conscious something about him, which made him hesitate to disclose to strangers a name, which in his ancestors had been honoured for generous

worth, and which in himself had been once blazoned in brilliant characters, and shone as a leading star in the hemisphere of fashion. He was born to an estate of several thousands a year in an inland county. Unhappily for him, his youth of waywardness was not submitted to the guidance or control of discipline and reason; he became master of large possessions before he had learned to be in any thing master of himself. Accustomed to dissipation from the dawn of manhood, reaching the meridian of fashion in his early morn, and matured to criminality in the spring of life, what wonder that these respectively terminated in mental debasement, wreck of fortune, and a hardened conscience. There was not a haunt of profligacy or vice which he had not frequented,

"Undoing and undone."

The *hells*, as they are emphatically and ominously called, held him in vassalage; and where was ruin busy, in which he was not implicated? Destructive gallantry marked his mad career, and many were the hearts in which his vicious blandishments infixed the sting of guilt, and its undying and remorseless attendant—misery.

A foreign land received him bankrupt in wealth and name; and his profligate conduct added another speck to that dark cloud of unworthy children of Britain, who, leaving their country in disgrace because they can remain no longer safely in it, change their haunts but not their habits. The refuse of their native land, they give impressions to foreigners prejudicial to the fair fame and sterling worth of their countrymen in general; and prove themselves doubly a curse to their mother, bv destroying her peace at home, and blackening her reputation abroad.

Of this description was the Stranger who was now the object of Mr. Stanhope's ministration. He had fled from his country, loaded with the infamy of adultery and duelling; he was now returning to it more deeply dyed in the Acheron of these vices, and blackened with a still more fearful curse. His early career was rather the result of levity than purposed vice; his latter course was principled by systematic guilt. Through his frivolity and appetite for sensual indulgences he had early wandered from the way to heaven, and he was afterwards glad to fall in with those specious philosophers, who, apprehensive of

their inability to reach it, reason themselves into a forced and feigned belief that there is no such place, and that religion is all a trick. Once filled with this notion, vaguely caught, but pertinaciously adhered to, he ascribed all his actions to fate, and fancied that death is the "end all, and the be all here." At times his reason faltered, and occasional flashes of insanity burst from him. Hence, his language had assumed a peculiar cast, which accounted for the uncommonness of his answers to the young men when they first saw him. Like the Grecian soldier, who, dying in a foreign land, remembered his sweet Argos, this unhappy, vicious stranger, as he found his end approaching, entertained the desire of returning to close his eyes in the country, though not in the place, where he first drew breath. He was at this time returning to the land of his sires, haunted by the horror of a deeply-seared conscience, now startled by the remembrance of a murder deliberately perpetrated on a successful rival. Glad to him would be the coming of death, if it brought with it annihilation; but if the passport to another world of rewards or punishments, then was its approach appalling indeed.

Agitated by such thoughts, there was no wonder that such haggardness of conscience was depicted in his looks when they entered the room. The visions of his sleep were filled with the memory of his past waking hours; and though when he opened his eyes and beheld them standing by, he loathed their presence, yet he dreaded more, under the fearful impressions of his distempered dreams, to be left alone. Hence his inconsistency in first refusing to answer, and then requesting them to remain with him.

When he paused at the word *myself*, he made an effort to appear composed, that his looks might correspond with his words, but in vain; for though he partially succeeded, there was something of a pensiveness in his appearance which mocked his assumed tranquillity. Observing this, the Pastor said, "Misery, Sir, is a creature of our own making, one formed and entailed by our own vicious practices. It is a necessary consequence of guilt, as happiness is of virtue."

"So you may persuade those, who are weak enough to believe you; but I, (here his voice faltered) I am above such superstition. I was doomed to be wretched, and, conscious of

this, I have delighted in spreading the contagion. I was betrayed by my fellow men, and have, in consequence, for years, pursued a career of vengeful satisfaction. You may call it a scorpion-like office; perhaps it was; but I was led on by fate, and had no choice. And, oh! the glorious mischiefs I have done. (Here a sardonic scowl gloomed over his countenance, and he became as one suddenly agitated by frenzy.) These hands have been stained with blood — these eyes have glutted themselves with the sight of dying rivals — these ears have drank in their moans. I am a murderer!" During this brief, but horrid catalogue of depravity and irreligion, he had rapidly assumed a wilder manner, and an unnatural energy; all the workings of a diabolical spirit showed themselves in his countenance, and when he confessed himself a murderer, it was accompanied with a look that exhibited all the horror of premature punishment. He sank exhausted on the bed. The three visitors were all struck with a sensation of abhorrence at this avowal. Poignant were the feelings of young Richard; his friend's gloom of mind was visibly increased, whilst the good Pastor, with all the sensibility of a Christian

spirit, mourned over this wreck of God's workmanship, debased, dishonoured;—wistfully he watched the struggle which agitated the frame of the conscience-stricken Stranger; then turning to his young friends, he exclaimed, "Truly there is no peace to the wicked; they are like the troubled ocean when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt."

CHAP. VIII.

THE SEVENTEENTH ARTICLE.

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When they returned to the parsonage, the Pastor, having first exacted a promise from the young men that they would remain with him to dinner, led them into his book-room, which, though not numerously stocked, contained a body of divinity sound and pithy, manifesting as well the cloven tongues as those of fire, — in other words, the knowledge and zeal of their authors. They had handled several huge tomes, containing sufficient matter to furnish a modern library, however capacious, when they came upon a copy of Calvin's Institutes, and near it, one of Latimer's sermons. Mr. Harley with avidity seized upon the former, and glancing over it, said to Mr. Stanhope, "Don't you think that Calvin was a great name?"

"Undoubtedly, sir, his is a great name, but one that has perhaps been unduly honoured by his admirers, and unfairly aspersed by his opponents. That he was a great man, and had

pious intentions, I am ready to grant, although I certainly do not hold with those particular tenets which go under his name."

"From this, sir," replied Mr. Harley, "I infer you are not a Calvinist, or what is frequently termed, Evangelical."

"As for the former appellation, I certainly am not, since I wish not my professions to be named of men; and for the latter, I trust that 'all who name the name of Christ' are evangelical. But as this is a term on the one hand arrogantly assumed to denote exclusive righteousness, and on the other given as a reproach, that which I covet most is the simple title of a Christian — a Christian minister, and next to that, a minister of the Established Church, because I conceive that Church to have embodied in her articles and formularies of worship, all things contained in the word of God necessary both for individuals and societies to practise, in order to their salvation."

"But, sir, excuse me if I say, that I have been taught to consider the articles and formularies of the Church as Calvinistic; and that even John Calvin, whom some of your divines malign so much, was consulted by our

reformers, and even contributed something to the articles." "I know not whence you have derived your instruction, Mr. Harley, but I am not surprized at your observation; not only because such opinions are prevalent in the world, but because I have observed something in you indicative of that spirit which such opinions have a tendency to engender; I mean, a kind of gloominess which occasionally overshadows your otherwise amiable deportment. For my own part, though I do not deny that some of the articles *may* be construed in a Calvinistic sense, yet taking them altogether, and judging of them one by another, with the measure of scripture for our standard and guide, we shall find that they are not so, and that they are purely in the spirit of the gospel of peace, which was given to man, as 'the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth.'"

"As we are now on this subject," said Mr. Harley, "will you do me the favour to canvass it with me, for it is one which occupies much of my thoughts, and which may possibly at times throw over me a shade of gloom. Do not, however, suppose that I make this request from any controversial spirit, or a hope to display my

acuteness. I assure you, sir, my only motive is a desire to know the truth; and this must be my apology for obtruding this question upon you."

"My dear sir," answered the Pastor, "I fully appreciate your motives, and am ready to offer you some reasons for my opinions. Did I suppose that you were actuated by any but the best intentions in starting this subject, I would decline it at once; for I deprecate the discussing of difficult theological questions, when the disputants are influenced by a vain desire of signalizing their address and skill in the arena of controversy, like gladiators in an amphitheatre, or from any other design than 'the glory of God,' as set forth in the edification of the human mind, for the bettering of the human heart. This lesson is powerfully conveyed to us in the account given of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, in which we are told, that 'He came with a rushing mighty wind,' and appeared as 'cloven tongues of fire,' showing us first the prostration or humility of heart requisite for all edification, whether of knowledge or faith, and the mutual imperfection of knowledge, signified by the cloven tongues, and of zeal signified by those of fire, unless they are

combined and co-operate, or, as the apostle has appositely expressed it, produce 'a zeal according to knowledge.' Guided by these principles, whatever observations I may offer on this point, I beg you to receive as those of a fallible man, who, conscious of this, does not require implicit consent to his opinions.

"I mean to enter into the Calvinistic question, only as it regards our articles and formularies, which, by the assistance of these helps, I am prepared to prove are not in unison with the particular dogmas of the Genevan school." So saying he took down from a shelf, the Book of Homilies, the Common Prayer, Todd's Examination into the Opinions of the Reformers, Latimer's Sermons, and some others to which he might have occasion to refer.

"The grand point," observed Mr. *Harley*, "upon which this question altogether turns, is the seventeenth article, which, as it expressly contains the tenet that is peculiar to Calvin, it might be as well to consider, because if you can establish the non-Calvinism of it, the other parts will easily meet a solution."

"Then, first," replied Mr. Stanhope, "let us turn to those passages in his Institutes which

give him the peculiar distinction of bestowing a name upon his followers, such as St. Paul himself disclaimed among his converts."

"But, sir," exclaimed the young man, "St. Paul is the very person from whose writings we derive our strongest arguments and proofs in favour of Calvinism."

"Be that as it may, or as you judge," replied the Pastor, "we will not quarrel about names. The question before us is, is the seventeenth article exclusively Calvinistic? To understand this, let us first see what Calvin says upon this point." Then opening the Institutes, he continued: "In the third book, chapter xxi. § 5. he gives this definition: 'We call predestination the eternal decree of God, by which he hath appointed with himself what he willed to be done respecting every (*unoquoque*) man. For all are not created in an equal condition *; but

* A much greater authority than John Calvin, a man who was under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, even the sweet Psalmist of Israel, the man after God's own heart, has said, "The Lord looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men. 'From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He *fashioneth their hearts alike*, He considereth all their works." Psalm. xxxiii. 13, 14, 15. Which opinion is most worthy of the Great Author of all things? which writer most deserving credit? Let the Christian judge.

to some eternal life, to others eternal damnation is pre-ordained. Therefore in like manner as every one has been made (*conditus est*) to one or other of these ends, so do we say that he has been predestined either to life or to death.'

"In the beginning of § 7. we find these words: 'Although it has already been made sufficiently clear that God by an hidden purpose freely elects some and rejects others, yet his election of grace (*gratuita*) has been but half set forth, until we come to individual persons to whom God not only offers salvation, but appoints it in such a way that the certitude of its effect cannot be matter either of suspense or doubt.' And from the conclusion of the same section I shall read you a longer and more explicit paragraph. 'We say, what indeed scripture clearly shows, that, by an eternal and unchangeable design, God hath once appointed whom in due time he would bring (*assumere*) to salvation, whom again he would devote to destruction (*exitio devovere*). This design, as it regards the elect, we assert, has its foundation in his gratuitous pity, without any respect of human dignity; but those whom he devotes (*addicit*) to damna-

tion by his just indeed and unblameable, but incomprehensible, decree, are shut out from the approach of life. * But now we conclude that there is a calling in the elect, as a testimony of election; then justification, another mark of its manifestation, until he come to the glory which constitutes its completion. But in the same manner as the Lord distinguishes his elect by calling and justification, so does he disclose, as it were by signs, what judgment awaits the reprobate, either by excluding them from the knowledge of his name, or from the sanctifica-

* Let the reader compare this language (with what feelings he may) with the following paragraph taken from the third part of the sermon for Rogation week. "By him (Jesus Christ) hath Almighty God decreed to dissolve the world, to call all before him, to judge both the quick and the dead, and, finally, by him *shall* he condemn the wicked to eternal fire in hell, and give the good eternal life, and set them assuredly in presence with him in heaven for evermore." And if this is not sufficiently explicit, let him consider the following taken from the sermon of the Nativity. "After he (Jesus Christ) was once come down from heaven, and had taken our frail nature upon him, he made all them that *would* receive him truly, and believe his word, good trees and good ground, fruitful and pleasant branches, children of light, citizens of heaven, sheep of his fold, members of his body, heirs of his kingdom, his true friends and brethren, sweet and lively bread, the elect and chosen people of God."

tion of his spirit."* These may, I think, be considered as clear points of his peculiar doctrines; and the admission of them constitutes Calvinism as distinct from any other tenets. Let us now see the words of the article on this subject." Here he opened the Prayer book at the seventeenth article. "In the first place, I grant that there is a resemblance between Calvin's definition and that given by the article; yet I think the spirit of them differs widely: one goes on in a general manner, the other in a particular. What Calvin assigns as the purpose of God to individuals (to say nothing of the inequality of condition by birth), the article lays down on a broad basis which is from that eternal and inscrutable purpose of God, by which he has constantly decreed to appoint a means

* How different is this dreadful language from that of the Homily of falling from God, especially from these expressions: "Sometimes men go from God by direct idolatry, as Israel and Judah did: sometimes men go from God by lack of faith, and mistrusting of God: Sometimes men go from God by the neglecting of his commandments, &c."

And in the second part of the information of certain places of the Scripture, we find a very different view of reprobation and final condemnation in this sentence: "As Christ Jesus is a fall to the reprobate, which yet perish through *their own default*; so is his word, yea, the whole book of God, a cause of damnation unto them, *through their own incredulity.*"

of grace, through which they who availed themselves of it in his own appointed way, might attain to everlasting felicity,—a mode of proceeding not at all to be inferred from Calvin's definition of the subject, who says, 'eternal life is pre-ordained to some, eternal damnation to others.' Where will you find any thing like that in the article? The *progress* of salvation is plainly marked and traced out, founded, certainly, as Calvin says, 'in the gratuitous pity of God,' and purchased by the atonement of Christ, as we believe. In it there is the purpose of salvation by Christ, the calling, the free justification, the adoption of sons, the assimilation to Jesus, the performance of good works, and *at length* (mark the term!) the attainment of everlasting felicity. Now Calvin precludes all this by his absolute decree of a personal preordination to everlasting life or everlasting death."

"But allow me, sir," interrupted Mr. Harley, "to remark, that the last extract from the Institutes is in some measure a commentary upon his opinion, as the progress you speak of is upon the article. He mentions calling, justification, and glorification."

"Granted, readily granted; but these things are wholly and solely exercises of God's power, whereas there is something required of man to be done in the article. There is a kind of condition, and acceptance. There are, for instance, man's obedience, and walking in good works. In these, surely, there is a great difference between Calvin and the Church.? He, overlooking the means, assigns the beginning and the end, the appointment and reward, which are peculiarly God's, and does not even seem to consider that man has any thing to do at all; besides, he limits these excellent benefits to individuals, whilst the article has no such limitation, except it is 'bringing men by Christ to everlasting salvation.' Indeed, considering his definition and commentary in the words we have selected, we find nothing assigned to Christ 'who is the chief corner stone' of the article, as it is altogether of our faith; neither is there any recognition of the operation of the Holy Spirit, except in excluding the reprobate from his sanctification: in this respect also there is a wide difference between them. I do not mean to say that Calvin excludes from his scheme of theology the efficacy of the Redeemer, or the agency of the Spirit; but yet he seems in his

definition to lose sight of both, which our article does not, for it speaks of 'the chosen in Christ out of mankind to be brought by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour,' and of the Spirit's working, in due season. So that I do most unqualifiedly assert, that the doctrine of predestination set forth in our article, is different from the predestination advanced by Calvin, in those passages which we have selected as conveying his peculiar opinions, and which are as parallel as the respective notions of the Reformers and himself on this subject could be. I do not now dwell on which view is most consonant with Scripture. All that I proposed was, to show that the seventeenth article is not exclusively Calvinistic; and this I think I have done, even dropping the adverb. Do not forget these differences which I have pointed out; and let your own judgment decide, whether the unequal condition by birth, the pre-ordination to death or life, the compulsion to salvation, the preclusion from grace, are the same as choosing out in Christ, bringing them by Christ to everlasting salvation, calling them by the working of his spirit, obedience to the calling, justification, adoption of sons, con-

formation to the image of Christ, walking in good works, attaining *at length* to everlasting felicity.

"But if there is such difference in the part already noticed, how much more in the two other clauses? We read in one of them of 'the sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort of the doctrine to godly persons,' * by reason of the effects which predestination in the general view is calculated to produce on their minds, by directing their thoughts, confirming their faith in Christ, and exciting their love to God. We also read of 'the dangerous downfall of it,' of which the devil taking advantage, 'thrusts them into desperation.' But Calvin says, that

* How consonant is this view of God's dealings with man, in giving him a Saviour to make atonement for sin, effect a reconciliation between heaven and earth, and provide those means of grace by which every one who will (and unless every one can, preaching and praying seem of little use), may 'work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.' With fear and trembling when he looks at himself and considers his own imperfect nature, but with holy confidence, which imparts 'a sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort,' when he remembers the immutable goodness and never-failing mercy of God. Hence the true Christian is cheerful and lively, the prospect before him is sweet and pleasant, and forbids all obtruding moroseness and ascetic gloom, which are too often, it is to be feared, characteristics of those who hold the Genevan doctrines. Let history testify, and present experience evidence.

God 'by his decree precludes the reprobate from any approach to life;' and in like manner he asserts, that 'God excludes them either from the knowledge of his name, or the sanctification of his Spirit.' Now, unless the same thing can at the same time be the work both of God and the devil, there can be no affinity between the doctrine of the article and that of Calvin, because he assigns reprobation to God, and it attributes such a dreadful issue to the devil. Add to which the last clause, which, with a most comprehensive charity, leaves each person's apprehension of the doctrine of predestination to be formed, as it ought to be in all matters, from that view of it, 'which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.' Now the word of God, from one end to the other, makes man's salvation conditional; it abounds with *if*, *may*, *will*, *would*, but seldom *must*. All its promises are general, all its exhortations imply a power, however feeble, of obedience; all its conditions exact co-operation; all its rewards are held forth, and its punishments denounced, as if we were responsible and accountable creatures. But no one in common, much less in divine justice, is responsible for

any thing over which he has no controul, and which depends upon some one else rather than himself; neither is the instrument accountable for the mischief done by the person who wields it. And does not this system strip us of all agency, and convert us into passive instruments, incapable of doing anything except impelled; and, consequently, neither responsible nor accountable? Yet St. Peter exhorts us to be 'ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us,' * whilst we are on the earth, and the Saviour speaks of our 'giving an account in the day of judgment." † But besides this, which is required of us individually, the ministers of the Lord are said by St. Paul to 'watch for souls, as they that must give account.' ‡ What *can* that account be, if 'to some eternal life, to others eternal damnation is already pre-ordained?' For this is the sum of Calvin's predestination. However, I waive entering further into the main question, for it would lead us into a labyrinth from which we could not extricate ourselves, before we shall be summoned to dinner; and I conceive that I have briefly given

* 1 Pet. iii. 15. † Matthew, xii. 36.
‡ Hebrews, xiii. 17.

you some reasons for vindicating the seventeenth article from the charge of exclusive Calvinism, which might be enlarged upon still more satisfactorily. At the same time I would allow to others what I claim for myself, respect for sincerity, and forbearance for misapprehension, if any there be."

"I must acknowledge," said Mr. Harley, "that accustomed as I have been of late to consider the position of the article Calvinistic, and the Genevan reformer's interpretation of scripture on this subject correct, I was not aware that so much and so forcibly could briefly be said against his view of this celebrated article. Allow me to trespass further upon your time by requesting your reasons derived from the formularies, as you must be aware that they lie under the same imputation; and it has been asserted that all the writers of the church previous to the time of James I. * were Calvinistic in doctrine."

"I shall be happy in attending to your

* See Scott's Force of Truth. This position is quite untenable. Independent of the sentiments of Latimer, Cranmer and others, the plain spirit of all our formularies is opposed to it. On this subject we may say in reference to this writer's opinions of predestination, "Ab uno disce omnes."

wishes. As I have endeavoured to prove that the words of the article, taken even by themselves, do not exclusively or necessarily admit of the same construction which the words of Calvin do, I will next essay to point out a still wider difference between them, when viewed in conjunction with the other formularies of the church. And as baptism is the initiatory ordinance of the church, it may not be irrelevant to see how this question is considered in the offices used by us on that occasion. In the article we find a mode of expression very like that used on predestination. The points in common are 'the adoption of sons,' and 'the confirmation of our faith,' and, perhaps, 'increasing in grace.' * Now as the adoption of sons is in article 27. assigned to baptism, and in the seventeenth a consequence of the election of God, and as both lead to a confirmation of faith, may we not suppose, I do not say conclude, that they who drew up these two articles had an impression, possibly a principle, that there is some affinity between baptism and election. This conclusion derives additional force from certain expressions used in the bap-

* See article 27 compared with article 17.

tismal service, which show that all * who were baptized are among the 'elect children of God,' or 'those chosen out in Christ;' and if so, then the article of predestination, which by itself differs much from the words of Calvin, in conjunction with this has a much wider difference."

"But may not such expressions be among those which our reformers adopted with too little care and attention to scripture?"

"You mean those which are taxed as unscriptural. Be this as it may in the opinion of some, who can ill reconcile their private tenets with their public declaration of assent to the articles and formularies, I, for one, have yet to learn what these are, and therefore cannot answer them. But to proceed (turning to the service of baptism), let us see what this says on the question. It commences with a short exhortation, from the consideration of our inability to be born again, to pray to God for his bless-

* This is in strict unison with the conduct of the king mentioned in the parable (*a*), who made a marriage for his son, and who, after avenging himself of the murderers, again sent out his servants, who brought out of the highways "as many as they could find, *both bad and good.*"

(*a*) Matthew, xxii. 1. &c.

ing upon what is about to be done; accordingly, in the prayer which follows, we supplicate for the sanctification of his Spirit, deliverance from his wrath, and that the child now to be baptized 'may walk religiously in good works, and attain everlasting life.' This is followed by another prayer 'for remission of sins, and spiritual regeneration,' founded in the unlimited exhortation of the Saviour, which must ever stand obnoxious to Calvinism, 'Ask and ye shall have,' &c. After which the portion of scripture taken from Mark, x. 13. is read, and this is succeeded by the address that sets forth the hope we entertain, that God will 'embrace the child with the arms of his mercy,' &c., which is called 'the goodwill of our heavenly Father.' We then thank God for '*calling* us to the knowledge of his grace and faith in him.' The sponsors are then addressed and questioned, and when they have 'given a reason for the hope that is in them,' the minister, in short petitions, prays for the ratification of God's promises to the infant; and in the consecratory prayer we find a petition that the child thus baptized 'may ever *remain* in the number of

God's faithful and ELECT children.'* The child

* See a corresponding expression in Peter's first *general* epistle, chap. i. 2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." This general title of Elect, it must not be forgotten, was applied by St. Peter "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." If by the Elect we are to understand those to whom in Calvin's sense, "everlasting life is pre-ordained," then not only were all the immense numbers of Christians scattered through these extensive regions saved, but St. Peter knew it. But if he knew it, what need was there for his epistles, abounding as they do with directions to regulate their conduct, and exhortations "to make their calling and election sure," by going on from virtue to virtue, (2 Peter, i. 5—11.) and by "growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." We can only reconcile this title, and his earnest exhortations, as well as suppositions of their falling away, (2 Peter, ii. 20, 21.) by viewing it in the light in which we have considered the predestination of the article, the calling of Christians to the *means of salvation*, without our attempting to fathom that which can be known only to God — their final state.

That such title also was used in the age succeeding the apostles, comprehending the church community without distinction, see the beginning of Clement's first epistle to the Corinthians. And Ignatius speaks of the predestination of the church at Ephesus before the world began, in the beginning of his epistle to it. He applies the title of Elect to the church at Tralles. By these expressions can only be understood those who were admitted to the means of salvation by the calling of the Gospel; not that all the members of these churches were absolutely sure of everlasting life by a decree which their own conduct could not affect, for many of them fell away and committed gross sins.

is then sprinkled or dipt at the option of the parents or friends, and signed with the sign of the cross, which binds it sacramentally to the service of God. After which, comes the declaration of its regeneration and 'engrafting into the body of Christ's church,' which is adduced as a reason for thanks to God, and for prayer that 'the child may lead the rest of its life according to this beginning,' which is properly succeeded by the Lord's prayer, and a thanksgiving for the 'regeneration, adoption, and engrafting of the child into the holy church,' with a suitable request that these benefits may be duly employed. The whole concludes with an address to the sponsors declarative of their duty.

"A slight comparison of this service with the article will show us a harmony and an agreement of doctrines and opinions irreconcileable to those of Calvin. The election we hold in the church is that general diffusion of the Gospel through Christian lands, by which they who were gentiles before became acquainted with 'the things that belong to their everlasting peace.' Mark, I say nothing of final salvation; I consider that the election declared in Scripture and embodied in our articles and formula-

ries is consonant and co-extensive with the diffusion of Christianity: * and hence the promises and threatenings of the gospel are set before us in all their native force, and operate as stimuli to excite us to earnestness and labour in our vocation. † Such, at least, I take to be the

* Consonant with this idea that our reformers looked upon the visible church as the elect of God, without reference to individual final salvation or reprobation, we read in the second part of the homily for Whitsunday: "The true church is an universal congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner stone." And in the article of Justification(a), written by Cranmer, we find the same idea: "When we be once elected and admitted into God's service, and have received our justification in baptism, or be restored thereunto by true penance, then must we continually walk," &c.

Such also is the spirit of the article on predestination taken from the "Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum," begun by Henry VIII, and finished in 1552. And Hooker in his Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V., § 60, says, "Predestination bringeth not to life without the grace of external vocation, wherein our baptism is implied."

(a) See Todd's Doctrines, &c. p. 34.

† The life of a Christian is represented both by the Saviour and his Apostles as one of labour and active exertion. Take for instance, "*Strive* (b) to enter in at the strait gate." "*Seek*

(b) The word here used is taken from a term applied to wrestlers in the Olympic Games, all whose physical powers were necessarily exerted and put forth in their contests for mastery. It is used in several other places of Scripture, and most pointedly in this sense in 1 Corinthians, IX. &c.

spirit of our church, reflected as it truly is from the word of God."

"But by this you nullify predestination altogether; for if you assert that the election of baptism is the predestination of God, you ascribe to him an imperfection, because, of those who are baptized, thousands not only commit sins, but die in them."

"Stop, my good Sir: I speak only of the

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ye first the kingdom of God." "*Come* unto me." "*Search*(a) the Scriptures." "*Watch* and *pray*, lest ye enter into temptation." "Give *all diligence* to make your calling and election sure." "*Work out* your own salvation with fear and trembling." These, and many other similar passages, prove that something must be done by man, and that no calling or election, in the general economy of salvation, will suffice him, without his co-operation; and unless his co-operation depends in some measure upon himself, what need of exhortations and threatenings to induce him "to put forth his hand to the tree of life and live for ever?" Man's daily labour for his subsistence is no inapt analogy to his spiritual calling; for both became incumbent upon him at the same time; and in this view the petition for "daily bread" carries with it the effect also of spiritual assistance upon application, and striving for it, as the means of bodily support follow the exertion of bodily labour and industry.

(a) That is, "as men dig deep into the bowels of the earth for hidden treasures, so do ye seek deeply and with care in the Scriptures."

known and revealed will of God; secret things belong to himself, with these I presume not to meddle. But was not Judas chosen out to be a disciple? and yet he became reprobate; and of him the Saviour said, 'Have I not chosen you twelve, but one of you is a devil?' My observations are confined to the view which I consider the church has taken. In this there is no exclusive personal election or reprobation. The will of God, as declared in Scripture, that 'all men should be saved,' and the animated truth so often reiterated, that Christ died for ALL, is the principle on which I think that article was formed: as such I consider it, and as such I am decidedly convinced that it is consonant with the plain design of the oracles of God, which make known to us enough of the divine will to encourage us to the practice of virtue in faith by the 'hope of the recompense of reward,' and deter us from vice, through dread of the punishment prepared for those who, knowing their duty, forsake the paths of peace and die in their sins.

"I cannot, for my own part, avoid thinking, when I see so many dissenters from our doctrines and worship, that the dissension which

exists within the walls of our Sion, is one of the strongest auxiliary supports they have; and no one subject is ramified into so many exceptions against us as the Calvinistic tenets. The Fatalist, the Unitarian, and the Baptist so called, 'suck (as the Psalmist says) no small advantage' from this perverted source. The first of these ascribes all his actions, whether good or bad, to Fate ordained by God; the Unitarian, from the consideration of a partial atonement, easily comes to a denial of it altogether; whilst the last denomination, derive all their force from the admission of irrespective election by some of ourselves. If the child baptized is already predestined to happiness, the vows of sponsors are not needed; and if pre-ordained to misery, all their efforts are vain; for who can resist the decrees of God? Our reformers never could have been blind to this inconsistency, otherwise they would not have drawn up a form so absolutely conditional, that Calvinists cannot use it without offence to their consciences. At least, were I a Calvinist, I would not be prevailed upon, by any consideration, to answer at the font for a child. I should think it an act either of presumption or mockery. But under-

standing predestination, in the spirit of the article, as the purpose of God to give the blessings of the Gospel to all, 'without respect of persons,' who will embrace the faith of his Son, leaving the award of everlasting life, or the sentence of eternal death, to be declared in the day of judgment, according to their works, in the manner Jesus Christ has pointed out to us in his description of that awful day, the pious sponsor may truly hope that God's blessing will attend his service, and that the child baptized may fulfil the baptismal covenant, and 'ever remain in the number of God's faithful and elect children.' For if the child has not power, according to the free grace of God, to use those advantages offered to him by his embracing the profession of the Gospel in baptism, the ordinance is of none effect. But what says Augustine in his first epistle to Valentinus? 'Take away free will, there will be nothing to be saved? Take away free grace, there will not be the means of salvation? Take away free will, how shall God judge? Take away grace, how shall he save the world?' But besides this argument, which might be much dilated, the spirit which pervades the Liturgy, appears to me

as contrary to the tenor of Calvin's opinions as the subject will fairly admit of. The adoption of sons, which is made in baptism, is all along considered, and influences the character of every exhortation and petition. And in the Homilies there is the same impression: take for instance this passage, among many, in 'The Sermon of the Nativity:' 'After he (Christ) was once come down from heaven, and had taken our frail nature upon him, he made all them that *would receive* him truly, and believe his word, good trees and good ground, fruitful and pleasant branches, children of light, citizens of heaven, sheep of his fold, members of his body, heirs of his kingdom, his true friends and brethren, sweet and lively bread, the elect and chosen people of God.' And in 'The second Sermon of the Passion,' we read as an inducement to forsake sin, 'God gave us not an angel but his Son. And what Son? His only Son, &c. Was not this a singular token of great love? But to *whom* did he give him? He gave him to the whole world; that is to say, to *Adam*, and *all that should come after him.*' Again in the same homily: 'Whereby we persuade ourselves, that God both hath and will forgive our

sins, that he hath accepted us again into his favour, that he hath released us from the bonds of damnation, and received us again into the number of his elect people.' I take these passages at random, and could multiply them greatly, were it necessary. Let us now turn to the doctrines of the Reformers (laying his hand upon a copy of Todd's Compilation) and in the Augsburg Confession, which is called 'the boast of Germany and pride of the Reformation,' we find this well known and striking passage*: 'And as the preaching of repentance is universal, so also is the promise of grace universal, and commands all to have faith and receive the benefit of Christ: as Christ says, 'Come unto me all ye who are heavy laden.' And a little lower down in the same page there is the following declaration: 'Here there is no need of disputations concerning predestination and such subjects. For the promise is universal, and detracts nothing from works, nay, stirs up to faith and truly good works.'

"In the Saxonic Confession, which Melancthon, the co-adjutor of Cranmer, calls 'The

* Todd's Doctrines, &c. p. 152.

repetition of the Augsburg Confession,' we find the following *: 'And since we are proposing consolation to consciences in repentance, we add not here questions concerning PREDESTINATION, or concerning ELECTION; but we lead all readers to the word of God, and direct them to learn the will of God from his word, as the Eternal Father directs, 'Hear ye him;' let them not seek other speculations. It is most certain that the preaching of repentance belongs to all men, and accuses all men. So the promise is both universal and offers remission of sins to all, according to those universal sayings, 'Come unto me, &c.,' and Romans, x. 12. xi. 32.'

"'Let individuals include themselves in this universal promise, and not yield to diffidence (or want of faith) but strive to assent to the word of God, and obey the Holy Spirit, and ask to be assisted; as it is said Luke, xi. 13. 'How much more shall he give his Holy Spirit to those who ask him?''

"In 'The necessary Erudition for every Christian Man,' which is ascribed to the pen of

* Todd's Doctrines, &c. p. 183-4.

Cranmer, we read of election by baptism; so also in 'The Reformatio Legum,' &c. Indeed, I can hardly open a page in this book, which contains the rudiments from which our Reformers compiled our articles and the doctrines of our forms, which does not contain something that clashes with the principles of Calvin. The collects, also, the several prayers, the litany, and every form we use are equally repugnant to the same principles: they breathe a spirit consonant with the universal promises of grace to all who by repentance and faith seek for it.

"I will not detain you longer than to read you two or three passages from the Sermons of the venerable Latimer, the contemporary and coadjutor of Cranmer, a volume of which lies by you." The young man handed it to him, and he pointed out to him the following from the Sermon on the Parable of the Supper*, commenting on the words, "Come unto me," &c. "Mark here, he saith, come *all* ye; wherefore then should any man despair to shut himself from the promises of Christ, which be general and pertain to the whole world?" And

* Preached in 1552.

again: "Therefore for the reverence of God, consider these things (God sending his callers to invite guests, even all the world), consider who calleth, namely, God; consider again who be the guests, all ye." In the Sermon on the second Sunday in Advent, he pointed out the following observation on John, v. 24. "This is now a very comfortable thing, and a great promise which God maketh unto the whole world," &c. "And on the third Sunday in Advent, commenting on John xx. 29., Latimer says, 'So that there was never any which believed in Christ which was lost, but all believers were saved; therefore, it is not to be doubted, but that if we will believe we shall be saved too.' But why multiply instances," said he, "of his opinion on this subject, excepting, indeed, this one, with which I must conclude my observations at present: 'We must, therefore, come to Jesus, which is the right and true Saviour. And he it is that hath saved us from sin. Whom hath he saved? His people. Who are his people? All that believe in him and put their whole trust in him, and those that seek help and salvation at his hand; all such are his people.' And at your own leisure I recom-

mend you to read frequently and carefully these two or three last pages of his sermon on Septuagesima Sunday, in which, commenting on the text, 'Many are called but few chosen,' he says: 'These words of our Saviour are very hard to be understood,' &c. He then points out 'the carnal liberty,' for which some who trust in predestination and election make this a cloak. 'Consider, I say,' he continues, 'Christ and his coming, and then begin to try thyself, whether thou art in the book of life or not; if thou findest thyself in Christ, *then* thou art sure of everlasting life,' &c. Again: 'But when we are about this matter, and are troubled within ourselves, whether we be elect or no, we must ever have this maxim or principal rule before our eyes; namely, that God beareth a good will towards us; God loveth us; God beareth a fatherly heart towards us.' And this he enforces from the consideration that God sent his Son into the world to save sinners, in such plain terms, that there can be no doubt of *his* opinions being opposed to those of Calvin; and if his, then those of at least some of the early reformers, for his intimacy with Ridley and Cranmer is well known; and where then is the truth,

that all our 'church writers previous to the time of James I. were Calvinistic in doctrine?'

"And now, my dear Sir, I hope I have said enough, if not to convince you, at least to show you some reasons why the non-Calvinistic members and ministers of our church should not be looked upon as intruders or non-evangelical, because they do not subscribe to the articles in the same sense that Calvin would have done, or teach the people as he would have taught them. For if I understand the articles and formularies aright, I have no hesitation in saying, that our church is opposed to Calvin, and that they who follow him swerve, I do not say intentionally, from that which they are solemnly bound to defend."

CHAP. IX.

TRIALS.

TRIALS.

There was one person in the parish who owned and appreciated the spiritual guidance of our good Pastor, who has been too long overlooked. She was not originally one of his flock. Recent circumstances had brought her within his range, who otherwise might have been known to him only by name. The experience of her few days was full of instruction, and she had undergone more affliction in a brief space, than many others do in the course of a protracted life. Her short eventful history affords another proof of an overruling Providence, and of the uncertainty of human pleasures, illustrating in the latter instance the truth of the maxim "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip."

About half a mile from the Parsonage stood, embosomed in trees, a substantially built house, characteristic of the genuine English farmer. It

was the habitation of Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorn, and family. They were notable people. The neatly cut fences, the well-cleared soil, the luxuriant grass, the strong and active teams, the judiciously crossed sheep, the symmetrical cattle, and the almost mathematically constructed stacks were so many proofs of the farmer's management and husbandry; whilst the glossy tables, the clean swept floors, the uncindered hearth, the bright fire-irons, the decent crockery, and the cool sweet dairy and cheese-room, evidenced the domestic economy of the wife. They had four children, one boy and three girls; the former was completing his stock of moderate learning at a neighbouring town, and his sisters were placed under the care of Miss Gainsford, who had been recommended to them by the Pastor, as a person in whom he took some interest, and well qualified for the useful task of forming the ductile minds of these females to habits which adorn every situation of life, because they are connected with the eternal welfare of the soul. Under her guidance, whilst the ópening mind was inhaling the sweets of that culture which embellishes, it was also imbibing principles of economy, which impart usefulness to the cha-

racter. Their accomplishments were substantial. Mrs. Hawthorn was a sensible woman, and had no idea of imbuing her daughters with a smattering of acquirements which they could not attain to; and which, if they could, would unfit them for the homely duties which their birth naturally marked out for them. How few mothers in middle life judge like Mrs. Hawthorn; and hence how many sow for themselves a harvest of cares for their old age, by transplanting their daughters from the plain soil of their native kitchen-garden, to those hot-beds of exotic tuition which pamper and sensualize, without contributing in return any solid fruits. The consequence of all this apery after high and fashionable things, is too often fatal to virtue; or if, by any good chance, that is escaped, destructive to that notableness of conduct and management, which is the best ornament of a sensible and virtuous woman. Mrs. Hawthorn, however, conceded something from her own old-fashioned notions, so far as such concession did not interfere with solid requisites. Miss Gainsford was an able promoter of her views, for experience had taught her to distinguish the gold from dross, and appreciate the advantage of a solid over a

flashy understanding. She had, nevertheless, been nursed in the lap of plenty. Her father was a respectable retired tradesman, who resided in one of those snug boxes which, lining every avenue leading to the great town, give strangers to suppose themselves already in London, when they are yet at some distance. From her earliest infancy, she had possessed every advantage which wealth could purchase, for she was an only child. How bitterly, then, disappointment must have wounded her sanguine heart! How withering to her must have been the blight of care! and how different now her pursuits and occupation from those which a few months ago poured into her lap the gayest flowers of fashion and youthful enjoyments! She, who had been reared in luxury, with servants at command, was now submitting to the humble occupation of instructing the daughters of a farmer in rudiments, which she had before despised for their humbleness; and she was now her own attendant. Formerly, masters of the greatest eminence, and in the most expensive accomplishments which wealth only can procure, waited obsequious to her nod; now she must control her dislikes and foibles, that she may more ef-

fectually perform her humble and allotted duties, duties imposed by her own voluntary decision. Yes, strange as it may appear, the once brilliant Miss Gainsford, the sun of her own bright circle, for whom the Temple of Fancy erst poured out its fashionable and most costly decorations, is now the humble governess, the confidential friend of a farmer's wife, and the obscure, nameless girl. Not twenty moons had filled their horns, since she was all gaiety, sprightliness, and fascination, with but one anxious thought in her heart, and that not always there, the thought of her admirer, her beloved Henry. He was a young man possessing a graceful exterior, a cultivated understanding, and a generous but thoughtless disposition. Dependent in some measure upon an aged uncle, who possessed the family estate, and whose heir presumptive he was, he had been placed out as clerk in a large mercantile house, in which he had been four years, when he met Miss Gainsford at the house of a mutual friend, in the presence of a large party. Her beauty, which was rather interesting than striking, had won his attention; whilst the brilliancy of her accomplishments, of which she was not indolent in making a display, pierced

his heart; and he who had entered that party free as air, retired from it a captive, bound in the silken chains of love. She also had marked his graceful attention to her, and not finding an opportunity that night for ascertaining all she wished to know about him, she called on the following day on Mrs. Burroughdale.

To her she was unravelling the maze of her own imaginations, and learning in return all the amiable qualities, prospects, and history of ——, when the servant announced Mr. Henry Stirling. Now dropped the veil over the suffused countenance of Julia, who, in a somewhat hurried manner, returned the morning salutation. It needs not be said, that both the young people protracted their stay as long as possible; neither that the veil did not long remain in its sheltering situation. After this introduction they were not remiss in finding opportunities of renewing their intercourse, for where one appeared in parties, the other was almost sure to be there also. The lady, however, at times assumed an air of indifference towards him, which to common observers might pass for what it personated; but others remarked in it a prognostication of the influence of the little god, fluttering as if afraid to settle,

and yet most active in hovering over his destined object, till the opportunity came. And come it did. The fashionable season was drawing to a close, when a circumstance occurred which accelerated the putting the important question, on which so much depends. Henry's uncle, who resided a considerable distance from London, was taken suddenly so ill, that his nephew was sent for with the injunction that he should leave town by the first coach, which started on the following day, to take his station by the side of the sick bed. He could not quit his beloved Julia for an indefinite period of time without an endeavour once more to see her, and hear from her lips the sentence which was either to crown his happiness or render him miserable. What could he do? At the house of her father he had never been. Could he make his appearance there unknown to him, and perhaps contrary to his wish? He had too much delicacy of feeling; and though the ardency of his love for Julia prompted him to brave every hazard, yet the tender sincerity of his affection would not allow him to expose her to the chance of her father's displeasure, and to the probability of raising up in him an implacable enemy. He

determined to write to her. Many were the fragments of paper consigned to the flames, before he could satisfy himself in the composition which was to make known to Julia the ardour of his affection. At last the important billet was sealed and dispatched; and, tortured by his anxious feelings, he restlessly waited the issue of his communication. At length a step was heard, followed by a tap at the door, and a note was handed in. Eagerly he seized it — it was not from Julia; another half hour, for wistfully did he gaze upon the fingers of time moving on the face of his watch, dragged on its lazy, dronish pace. At length the all-interesting answer came. How thrilled his heart with almost suffocating emotion, when his eyes ran glistening over the endearing lines which stamped him the chosen, the accepted of his soul's dearest affection. Julia avowed a reciprocal attachment. One step only now remained, and he hesitated not to declare his honourable purpose to her father, who, Julia had intimated, would be alone and disengaged at six that evening. To say that he met with an unqualified acceptance is too much. The old man, however, did not reject him. With all the judgment of experience and

the coolness of calculation peculiar to age, but which seems unnatural and harsh to the glowing expectations of youthful lovers, he wished to ascertain, before he pledged himself, how far he was consulting his daughter's welfare, in sanctioning Mr. Stirling's addresses. The young man was ready to give him every reference, and the old man deemed it prudent to avail himself of his readiness; promising him, that if his enquiries were attended with the result he looked for, he should have no objection to admit him to his house as the avowed admirer of his daughter. This was as much as he could have expected; and joyfully his eyes telegraphed to his beloved the warmth of his feelings, whilst she, in return, gave him all the encouragement which the novelty of her situation and the presence of her father warranted.

The following day he left town. In a short time an intimation reached him which satisfied all his scruples, and announced that there was no impediment to his prosecuting his suit in the court of love. His relative still lingered in a doubtful state. At length, at the expiration of five weeks, the uncle was declared convalescent, and the nephew's attendance was no longer ne-

cessary. The old man acknowleged his attentions with great tenderness, and on the disclosure of his attachment, promised him every countenance and support. On wings of love and eager anticipation his imagination flew to Sandon villa, outstripping his material body the whole time consumed on his journey. No sooner arrived, than he started to pay his devoted duty to Julia. She was not at home. Oh! how the answer chilled the warm current of his heart, and sent him slowly, pensively chagrined back to his lodgings; from which uneasy state he was relieved by a line from his mistress, regretting her absence when he called, and beseeching him to seal her pardon by being with her by as early an opportunity as possible on the following morning. This was some cordial to his drooping spirits, and he retired to rest to dream of Julia and of happiness. Five months of almost uninterrupted deliciousness had passed, and with them the stream of affection seemed gliding on sweetly and endearingly as through banks crowned with roses. But, alas! "The current of true love never did run smooth." Who has not seen an April morning dawn with cloudless skies, and smile with glowing rapture, and

felt himself disposed to revel in the charms of nature, but, ere noon, the glowing scene has vanished, the clouds have gathered, the winds have risen, and storms have vented their violence? So was it with these blissful lovers, — their morn of love was bright and exhilarating, but a cloud, pregnant with storms, came over it. A large party was engaged to meet Mr. Stirling at Sandon villa, preparatory to the approaching union. All were assembled, save one. The appointed time had been most unfashionably exceeded. Julia, whose heart was throbbing with an indefinable sensation, and gnawed with an unbreathed presentiment of evil, privately despatched a messenger to Mr. Stirling's lodgings, who brought back the gloomy tidings that he had left them two hours before, with the avowed intention of visiting Mr. Gainsford. The cheek, over which doubt and hope had alternately spread their varying colours, now exhibited only one hue, the hue of disappointment, reflected from the heart sick with anguish, and paralyzed with bitter disappointment. She fainted. A scene of bustle ensued, more easily imagined than described. Fit followed fit; when carried to her own room, and left with Mrs. Burroughdale

alone, tears came to her relief, and the tempest, so long pent up within her bosom, burst, and was succeeded by a calm. It was the calm of exhaustion. Meanwhile the guests, wondering what all this meant, were perplexed how to proceed, when a note was brought to Mr. Gainsford with an apology from Mr. Stirling, intimating that an inexplicable mystery detained him from making his appearance. His disappointment and the continued indisposition of Julia, which prevented her from returning to her guests, rendered the night one of languor and heaviness, and they soon broke up. The following morning came, but brought with it no Henry. The day was declining, when an intimation reached her, that the most cruel circumstances kept him from her. At the same time he repeated the most tender assurances of his love and unabated tenderness. Mournful was the consolation. Why came he not himself? The question was soon solved to the world; for the evening papers blazoned forth the fact, in the Police Reports, that he was charged with a crime for which he was summoned to stand at the bar of judgment. He had left his lodgings on the preceding evening, with the intention of proceeding

to his beloved. But ere he reached the villa, he was unexpectedly seized upon by a police officer, and required to accompany him. Resistance was useless. In the watch-house to which he was brought and locked up for the night, he learned he was charged with committing various acts of swindling. Conscious of his innocency, he thought it better not to inform his friends of his real situation, but having sent an apology, wait the issue of the following morning. How was he surprised and astounded to hear various accusations not only advanced against him, but substantiated by the positive evidence of several witnesses, who swore unequivocally to his person. The magistrate, with that considerate attention which occasionally strips the compulsory part of the law of its rigidity, remanded him for another examination, to give him time and opportunity to consult his friends and take legal advice. It was in vain: his servant, who alone could prove an alibi on the day named in the charge, was not to be found. His committal was made out, and before the next evening he was lodged in Newgate. It was now in vain to dissemble his real situation; his name was blazoned in the several metropolitan journals; and

the dreadful circumstance published to the world could no longer be hidden from her who was all the world to him. Difficult was the task imposed upon him to communicate his dreadful situation to her. Yet this he did, on the following morning; accompanying it with the most solemn protestations of his innocence. Of his love he durst not now speak. And where was Julia? She had not left her room since that wretched night, on which her Henry's unexplained absence had smote so chillingly upon her heart. She remained ignorant of the fact known to all the world, which was utterly to dash from her lips the gilded cup of sparkling pleasure, which Love had crowned and Hope had brimmed. Her friend, Mrs. Burroughdale, for mother she now had none, was her constant companion, and sedulously strove to keep from her the dreadful tidings, by excluding the public prints and all visitors. She did not, however, soothe her with hopes sure to be mocked. She was rather preparing her for another shock, which must either tear from its fastening, the hold which love had gained upon her heart, or leave her wretched from the struggle. Her Henry's letter came. The cruel fact was dis-

closed. Contrary to the expectation of her friends, the bolt fell, to appearance, almost harmless. A sudden tremor, indeed, came over her, and shook her delicate frame, like the precursor of the tempest agitating the leaves — a hectic flushed her cheek, which was instantly blanched; the tear stood in her eyes; her bosom heaved. It was the struggle of a moment. Love and duty gained the ascendancy, and, with a fortitude beyond all calculation, she expressed her earnest wish to visit him in prison. His word to her was truth, and she was convinced of his innocency. And should a cruel injustice make her swerve from him whom in brighter days she loved? Should adverse circumstances keep her from him, whom fortune's smiles would have united? Oh no. There is a fountain in woman's tender heart which sends forth streams of fortitude and constancy scarcely known and faintly appreciated by the other sex. How richly does it scatter its cheering influence over man's wayward prospects! and, whilst all to him appears a desert, it bubbles at his feet to cherish and support. Beautiful is the picture drawn by the bard of Caledonia:—

"O woman, in our hours of ease
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
But when affliction clouds the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

Accompanied by Mrs. Burroughdale, this delicate girl, this child of fashion entered Newgate, and, bent on angel's visits, appeared to her lover as a being sent from another world, to add confidence to his innocent and lacerated heart. Oh! how did her presence cheer his gloomy lot. When she was with him, the stern precincts of his prison seemed dearer to him than his palace to the sovereign. Stern as they were, they were not wholly joyless, neither did they frown in vain; since but for this visitation he never could have known half the value of woman's love, or appreciated rightly the inestimable worth of that heart which, rising above scandal, appearances, and affliction, beat only for him disgraced, a felon. And but for this, she had wanted the opportunity of directing her naturally excellent qualities to their proper channel. It taught her wisdom, it expanded her virtues, which otherwise pampering fortune

might have obscured, and successful hopes diminished. So gracious are the ways of Providence! In the bitter draught which affliction presents, may always be found a cordial more valuable than the richest cup of pleasure can foam up.

The short interval which passed between his committal and trial had taught both of them more real wisdom than perhaps years of felicity would have done. It had taught them to consider their ways, and directed them to look for comfort and support under the various evils of life from that merciful and almighty hand which can alone dispense true blessings, and which "is not shortened that it cannot save." Well was it for both of them that such preparation, however imperfect, had been made for the evidence of the witnesses was irresistible, in consequence of the mysterious absence of his servant, who could have proved an alibi; and though all felt almost convinced of his innocence, yet the law was not susceptible of such impressions, because he failed to prove it legally. He was convicted; and transportation for seven years was the sentence. Every interest was made in the quarter highest in power, and promptest to mercy, but

without success. Innocence could alone have supported the lovers under this tremendous visitation. The parting hour came, but who shall describe it? "Forget me not!" These cautionary but assuring words were mutually interchanged; and so deeply were they infixed in the young man's heart, that in his first communication to her, after the paroxysm of his feelings had subsided, he inserted the following stanzas: —

FORGET ME NOT.

"Forget me not!" Can I forget
  That heart which beats for me?
Sooner shall blessed saints regret
Mortality's dull sun is set,
  And long for misery:
Sooner shall rivers backward flow,
  The eaglet spare the dove,
And verdure mantle o'er the snow,
  Than I forget thy love.

For thee how truly throbs this breast!
  Affection's grateful play
Owns thy pure constancy, confest
When cruel trials on me prest
  And dimm'd youth's jocund day.

Long will I hoard such faithfulness,
  And hold such virtue dear,
For, in the hour of dark distress,
  Thou wert an angel near.

Forget thee! No, oh never! no,
  Shall time my love efface,
By all which hope can smiling show
In sportive fortune's sunniest glow,
  By love's most winning grace,
By all our rapturous hours of bliss,
  By every dear loved spot,
By our last parting, fervent kiss,
  I will forget thee not.

Though banished now, and doom'd to bear
  A felon's galling chains,
Compell'd with hoary vice to share
Its punishment, its stinted fare,
  Its horrors and its pains;
My memory, unmoved, shall cling
  To all which erst it knew,
When pleasure fann'd us with its wing,
  Ere home and freedom flew.

That cheering smile which sweetly shone
  Charming a dungeon's gloom,
Like Christian love, when faith is done
Hope realized, existence gone,
  Illumining the tomb,

Shall still o'er dreariest scenes prevail
To solace every pain,
And, like the evening's freshening gale,
My drooping soul sustain.

And, should we never meet again,
And shame with me descend
To the dark grave where woe and pain
Injustice, cruelty, disdain,
And worldly sorrows end,
Yet, e'en in death, I'll think on thee;
And if aught cheers my lot
In that lone hour, oh! it shall be,
I have forgot thee not.

So long as her Henry was labouring at the hulks, and his name blackened by a foul stain, she resolved to forego those luxuries and comforts which her own home supplied. Associated as her name must now be with that of a felon whom the laws of his country had doomed to an ignominious punishment, she could no more mix in the gay scenes of the world. Could she be happy and merry, and float on the tide of society, whilst her Henry must necessarily be uncomfortable, wretched, and depressed? Ah no! His unhappy situation demanded from her,

she thought, a sacrifice; and with a strength of mind rising with misfortune, like a bark struggling with the waves and lifted up by the swelling of the surge, she resolved henceforth, till the innocency of her lover should be established, and his fair fame restored, for which she looked with something more than hope, to labour for her own support by taking an humble situation in some retired part of the country. Gladly did she avail herself of an offer from the Village Pastor to pass a few weeks in his family, for she hailed it as an omen sent to assure her in her purpose. Though many in high life would have been most happy to appropriate her talents and accomplishments to the benefit of their families, yet her soul revolted from this idea, for her resolution was to engage herself to as humble an employment as she could with propriety undertake. Mr. Stanhope had been made acquainted with the story of her trials by her kind and afflicted father, who had for many years, transacted for him, whatever little business he might have in London; and he immediately requested that she might become a temporary inmate in his small and quiet circle. His benevolent heart yearned over this extra-

ordinary girl with all a father's tenderness, and prompted him to be the good Samaritan to her bruised mind, by pouring in that balm of consolation which he knew so well to apply. The mild and placid demeanour of his wife, his own soothing conversations, and their manner of discharging all their duties, religious and social, had a happy and tranquillizing effect upon Julia, and confirmed her in her purpose of secluding herself from the busy world, and employing in some retired station her talents to the service of others; for, retirement without occupation would have been alike irksome to her mind, as it is inconsistent with our nature and principles as rational beings and Christians. Two months had glided over her since she came to the parsonage, and nothing but her resolution to support herself could have prompted her to desire to quit it. Happily her removal was not to any great distance. The young woman, who had had the management of Mrs. Hawthorn's three daughters left her to live in London, and joyfully did Miss Gainsford seize on this opportunity to execute her purpose; and as joyfully was she received into the humble but respectable family of farmer

Hawthorn. No arrangement could possibly have suited her better. The pittance she received afforded her a sufficient supply for her moderate support, and yielded a small surplus which she appropriated to the pious use of relieving others. And here, perhaps, in this humble situation, and in the discharge of self-imposed duties, separated from her lover by the most cruel circumstances, she was enjoying a nearer approach to true happiness than ever she had known in her days of splendour and fashion. She was beloved by her pupils, esteemed by their parents, and regarded with respectful attention by the whole neighbourhood. Above all, she enjoyed the friendship, the counsel and guidance of the Village Pastor,

"Who watch'd and wept, who pray'd and felt for
all !"

and her soul was thankful. She ascribed her comforts to their true source; and, in the ministration of the blessings showered upon her, she acknowleged the directing mercy of her heavenly Father. Occasionally the thought of her Henry's hard and painful situation would cloud her serenity, but the consciousness of his

innocency would again reanimate her to believe that he would bear it, and be supported by 'Him who, when father and mother forsake us, takes us up."

CHAP. X.

REPROBATION.

REPROBATION.

AUTUMN was now advancing progressively; the fields were cleared of their golden produce, and the eye could distinguish with more marked discrimination the various lines which indent the country. The Pastor and his two young friends were enjoying the calmness of evening; with more delight, because for some days the weather had been unfavourable, and left traces behind which indicated the approach of winter. There was a pensiveness in the scene which unconsciously shed its stealing influence over the small party, when Mr. Stanhope apostrophized the moment with the following stanzas, given to him many years before by a college-friend:

Autumn's rich tints are fading;
  Less varied is their hue;
And Winter's clouds o'ershading
  Deform the upland view.

The grove's sweet music ceases,
Or temper'd is its lay,
As in that hour when peace is
Hushing life's parting ray.

But tho' the year is closing,
And leaves bestrew the ground,
And nature seems reposing,
By torpid fetters bound;

Yet brighter days appearing,
Shall chase away the gloom;
And Spring with power endearing,
Renew the floweret's bloom.

So, man to earth tho' falling,
Again to life shall rise,
When Christ, his chosen calling,
Shall meet them in the skies.

Their attention was suddenly arrested from the face of nature by the sound of a horse galloping with great speed down the hill which led into the village. They had just caught sight of a horseman rapidly descending, when he suddenly disappeared, the clattering ceased, and a dreadful shriek followed. They hasted to the spot from which the abrupt sound pro-

ceeded, and beheld a man covered with mud, and bleeding profusely; at a short distance from him stood a horse, shaking in every limb from the effects of his speed and fall. The Pastor despatched one of the young men to procure further help from the village; and he and the other proceeded to render every assistance to the person, who was suffering severely from a broken leg and a contusion on the head. They raised him from the ground, and by the application of cold water restored him in some measure to animation; meanwhile some of the villagers arrived, and having formed a litter, conveyed him to the inn, where he was attended by a surgeon. In due time the Pastor and his friends left him, and called upon the wretched Stranger, who had now lingered some weeks. They found him much emaciated; there was a visible decline in his appearance, rendered almost horrid by his haggard looks and distorted eyes, whilst his conduct was more repulsive than ever, and showed how utterly he had wandered from the paths of peace. To the Pastor's mild expostulations he answered with a bold avowal of his reprobation; to his gentle and admonitory reasonings on the providence of God, he re-

plied with contempt; and the voice which endeavoured to whisper calmness to the agitated heart, was to him the sound of discordancy and despair. "It may be as you say," he replied to one of the observations of the Pastor, which reasoned on the goodness of the Most High;—"it may be so; but that goodness cannot reach me; my destiny is sealed beyond redemption. Fate, Fate has decreed that I should suffer. I have suffered, but it will soon be over, and my misery will soon have an end."—"Alas!" ejaculated the Pastor; and then addressing him, "You mean in respect of this world, I presume; but there is another,—another, very different from this,—one of rewards and punishments."—"Ha! ha!" burst from the stranger in an hysteric laugh. "Talk not to me of rewards and punishments; I have had mine here. Besides, such things cannot be when Fate rules us; destiny is at once our joy or curse, and we cannot shun it. What you call Providence, I call Fate; and though you gloss over the dealings of one brightly and encouragingly, it comes to the same thing;—it is Fate, Fate. And as such, your preaching is vain, your prayers useless. Why then should I submit to such

mockery? I do not mean to offend you. It is mockery to me, however earnest and sincere you may be in the discharge of it. Religion is all a juggle, a scheme, a contrivance, an imposition; some among yourselves insinuate this, though they have not the honesty openly to avow it, when they tell us that we are doomed before we are born either to misery or happiness. What is this but Fate? Fate garbled o'er by hypocrisy or superstition. No; were it otherwise, there is no redemption for me now; I must suffer; why, then, let me meet it undauntedly." He looked as if he would have braved even Death himself, were he at hand, armed with his stings, his everlasting goadings. His eye met the mild but pained countenance of the Pastor; he saw depicted on it compassion, intense interest; he watched it narrowly; he saw no selfishness there. The Pastor appeared to him a being of another nature, living, acting, praying for him. The Stranger's looks underwent a change; his thoughts revolted from their impiety; a voice seemed to whisper to his heart, "Can that be deception? Is it not rather virtue, exalted, disinterested virtue?" He felt softened, and inwardly ejaculated, "Amiable

enthusiast! can he feel thus for me, a stranger, a reprobate? For one who maligns his profession, who scoffs at his services, traduces his office, and blasphemes his God. Oh! if the things he speaks of be really true, then what a wretch am I!—tenfold more impious and accursed than ever." He was lost in abstraction; various were the workings of his countenance. The young men scarcely breathed, with such intense anxiety did they witness the scene. The Pastor fell on his knees, and poured forth his soul in prayer to "the Father of Lights" for the aid of his Spirit to guide him in his difficult work. Whilst he remained entranced in the communings of his own heart commercing with heaven, the Stranger eyed him as steadily as his maddening glance enabled him: he had never before beheld such a sight, and could not be insensible to it. Abandoned, wretched fatalist that he was, he could not resist the appealing action; he even exclaimed, "Oh, that I could pray as he does!" Roused by this ejaculation, in which the mind betrayed itself, Mr. Stanhope took him by the hand, and in a tone that spoke of the Christian serenity of his own soul, said, "And why not? Let me guide you."—"But,

oh! what would avail the prayer of such a wretch as I am, doomed, devoted?" — "Say not so, at least till you have tried, earnestly, seriously, repeatedly tried; say not so, for God is merciful." — "Merciful!" interrupted he, "how know I that? Nature speaks of his goodness and contrivance; but do storms and tempests, and earthquakes and pestilence, which whelm alike the innocent and guilty in one common ruin, speak of his mercy? Do sufferings such as mine, does poverty, does distress, does mental anguish, which we cannot controul, speak of his mercy? Yet, I fain would pray. Think you, there is pardon for me?" — "The Almighty God has promised pardon for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ, to all who repent and believe in him." — "To all who repent?" — "There is no other way." — "Then there is no hope for me, for I cannot repent. Am I then lost?" — "It is not for me," replied the Pastor, "who am so frail, so prone to sin, to assume the attribute of God, and judge my fellow-man. Judgment belongs only to God; and though his word denounces tribulation and anguish on every soul of man that doeth evil, yet the Gospel-message, of which I am a minister,

is one of glad tidings; and pleasing, delightful is our office, in declaring, as ambassadors from the Almighty, 'his good will to men:' that he 'wills not the death of sinners;' that he calls out and reasons with them, 'Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?' And he has declared to those who repent, that 'though their sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; and though they be like crimson, they shall be white as wool.' Such is our commission; for such is the tenour of his revealed will, which we must declare without reserve, and vindicate to sinners. To those whose souls are blackened with iniquities, and whom he still spares on earth, he proclaims that the day of grace may not yet be past, but if they repent they shall not perish; sin 'shall not be their undoing,' because his beloved Son, our Saviour Christ Jesus the righteous, has paid the penalty for us, and who, though he did no sin, was made sin for us: endeavour, therefore, I entreat you, to think of the love of God, and let your thoughts dwell upon his darling attribute, mercy, that——" "Oh, I cannot," burst from him in bitterness and despair; "I cannot, cannot; my thread of life is drawn out; my fates are completed; hell is yawning upon me; des-

truction is my lot." In such manner he continued blaspheming, reprobating. The gleam of cloudy sunshine was transitory; it left him darker than before: almost persuaded, like Agrippa, of the truth of the "faith as it is in Jesus," he could see nothing but eternal misery before him; for he felt assured that his end was come, and that even if disposed to repent, time was wanting, and that nothing but a miracle of mercy could save him. He could not repent: his long continuance in sin, his hardened impiety, his blaspheming thoughts, had, by quenching the spirit, so entirely possessed him, worse than a whole legion of demoniacs, that for him, in the ordinary dispensation of divine economy, grace could do nothing, salvation could not visit him. Nor is his a solitary instance of self-incurred reprobation, which some would vainly tax on the great, pure, and merciful Author of their being, forgetting that "the goodness of the Lord would lead them to repentance," and that it is wholly and solely their own faults if they are lost. So dangerous, so delusive is sin. Whatever be its beginning, its end, if persevered in, is despair, that despair which belongs to devils, and which drove the apostate Judas to close on

himself the gates of heavenly mercy, "by going out and hanging himself." And yet despair is not the offspring of impenitent vice alone; a belief in fate, or irrespective predestination, which comes to the same thing, by stripping the God of love of his peculiar attribute, and converting him into a tyrant and an arbitrary being, leads to dreadful issues.* Witness this wretched Stranger. He died that night; and the last words he uttered were, "Fate! despair!"

In a conversation which the Pastor held with the two young men after they left the cottage, he endeavoured to draw Mr. Harley's attention to the charge laid against his tenets by the Stranger, and inferred from it the injury done to the general cause of Christianity by the propagation of such doctrines. The young man denied that such charge could be made with truth. The Pastor confessed he knew not how it could be disproved; for in the mildest form of Calvinism, now called moderate Calvinism, there is the same plain inference. The Almighty is said to elect personally those whom

* See J. Wesley's sermon on this subject, in which he proposes to state "a few of the horrible blasphemies contained in this horrible doctrine."

he decrees to bring to salvation; the rest he leaves to themselves, to their own unassisted natures; and the consequence is, they sin, and die reprobate. "This is, I believe," said the Pastor, "the creed of moderate Calvinists, as they call themselves; they endeavour to take away the repugnancy of the Genevan scheme, and, like the Unitarians, who fritter away the Christian scheme of redemption by denying the divinity of the Saviour, and reducing our faith to a spurious kind of Mahometanism, they strive to present the fair side, that they may win men. For who, indeed, can embrace their creed, without first believing that he is one of the elect, and that they who do not receive the same tenets are left to themselves and their totally corrupt natures, and consequently become reprobates? Thus an immense majority of the Christian world are assigned to eternal destruction by the small, favoured minority. For, in believing that human nature is totally corrupt, do they not make the Almighty decree the reprobation of those whom he leaves to work all the evils of that nature, to which he has attached the sentence of everlasting death? Is this Christian love? Is this 'vindicating

the ways of God to man?' Is not this binding the human mind, that agent of the immortal and spiritual soul, in the same chains of necessity and fate, by which the material objects of creation are bound, and made to keep, each one, its unvarying course? Is not this fatalism? And is there not a great similarity in sentiment between the Genevan and Lucretian school? For my own part, (continued he with much animation, for it was a subject which always warmed him,) I think there is something alike presumptuous and debasing in these notions. They serve bad men, and they principally avow fatalism, as a cloak for licentiousness; a proof of which we have had in the wretched Stranger. But, admitted into religion under whatever name they profess themselves, they are doubly repugnant to the Christian mind, which delights to contemplate the mercy and love of God extended over all his works. They cannot be entertained by us, without either our exalting ourselves into a belief that we are among the favoured few, or depressing our condition infinitely below that of 'the brutes which perish.' For, if a person once believes that his reprobation is decreed, decreed from all eternity before

there were either men or angels, and that he is, in consequence, created for no other purpose than to suffer everlasting torments, he must, if he thinks at all, envy the condition of beasts, which having passed through their allotted routine of existence, find rest in death. So long as this principle is inculcated by men who enjoy the light of the Gospel, and profess themselves to be animated by a double portion of God's spirit, the notions of the heathen and the infidel stand on lofty grounds. For better not to be as they confess, than be doomed from all eternity, without the possibility of escape, to endless misery. Oh! what a cruel mockery is this of the Saviour's atoning blood! * How does it detract from the touching and heart-appealing prayer of the Redeemer on the cross for his persecutors, 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!' In vain did the Saviour toil, watch, pray, suffer, die for the world, if an eternal decree binds all in fate, and only a few have the power given to them of par-

* The following remark of the Rev. T. Jackson, a former president of Christ-church, is very apposite: —

"I could persuade a great part of the clergy of the kingdom not to make Christ crucified and raised from the dead, *a mere bystander* in most of the disputes concerning *election*, *&c.*, as if

taking of the fruits of his atonement. Well may the heathen, startled by such inconsistencies, reject the Gospel of peace, which, thus represented, appears to them the message of death. Well may sceptics and infidels 'rail against the Lord and his Anointed.' Yet the church of God has less to fear from their open blasphemies, than from the secret and reserved doctrines of those from whom they deduce their countenance and support. So that the Catholic church *, and with it our established apostolic church, may complain in the words of the royal Psalmist †, 'It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me, then I would

he had shed his precious blood to no other purpose, save only the purchase of their own salvation, or the eternal excommunication or damnation of others." See his Works, book x. chap. 53.

It is also, perhaps, to the prevalence of these principles, and the deductions which may be made from them, that Unitarianism owes much of its progress; for many of those who embrace these unchristian tenets were once despisers of church-government, and rigid advocates of Calvinism.

* That is, the universal church of Christ, not that church which makes the Pope supreme on earth, saints as mediatorial as the Messiah, and which allows, among other unscriptural tenets, plenary indulgence for sins past, present, and to come.

† Psalm lv.

have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man, my equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.'"

Perhaps the Pastor betrayed too much warmth in these observations; but it was a subject on which he was always animated, and the abhorrent avowal of the wretched Stranger had excited him beyond his wonted fervour. He saw an illustration of what he had not doubted, to what issues a belief in fate may and does drive people. There was also another topic of conversation which engaged them, suggested by the scenes of that evening, — a late or death-bed repentance. On this subject also the Pastor was unusually fluent at this time, and perhaps from the same stimulus. After several remarks, he continued, "Too many there are who are accustomed to put off the day of salvation, in the hope and belief that they will have sufficient time afterwards, when called upon to suffer by afflictions and sickness; yet how few of these find that destined hour. The night closes in upon them when they cannot work. Or, if the visitation of the Lord overtakes them, and they do for a time repent, and enter freely into re-

ligious duties, I have found in my experience, that this, like the seed thrown on stony ground, is but for a season. If they recover, they return to their former coldness; and religion, which lately seemed their only business, is again considered as an almost indifferent thing. So strong are habits, so difficult is the work of salvation, particularly when neglected. And, surely, when we consider attentively it cannot be otherwise. Salvation is the greatest, the most exalted happiness and blessing which immortal beings are capable of: it is that for which we were created. Our first business, therefore, should be to prepare for it, remembering how short is life, how boundless eternity. But when we squander away the most valuable portion of that life, or waste on improper objects the whole of it, except, perhaps, a few short weeks, which, under some special visitation of affliction, we endeavour to employ well, what wonder that, creatures of habit as we are, the prevalence of long custom in carelessness or sin should overcome our brief practice in godliness. Nor does this lessen the gracious helps and assistances which God supplies; for 'the Almighty who created us without ourselves,

will not save us without our co-operation,' is the language of experience and antiquity, and the purport of his Gospel. How tremblingly alive ought we to be to this! For, though a sincere repentance through faith in Christ will avail to the putting away of sin, and the obtaining of salvation through the grace of God, yet as none but God can know the sincerity of such repentance, and as we see so many who, when they have recovered from sickness, forget the good resolutions they made when afflicted, ought we not, even from this view, to trumpet in the ears of sinners, that now and 'now only is the accepted time;' and that if they neglect it, the hour may come when they cannot repent; or, what is equally probable, when their repentance may be rejected, although like Esau, accompanied with many tears."

The Pastor then pointed out how much harm is now done to true and vital religion from a laxity of principles, or an overweeningness to exalt God's mercy at the expense of his revealed will. "Hence (continued he) we hear of so many malefactors in a few short hours becoming new creatures, putting off the old man of corrupt habits and lengthened vice, and putting on the new man

of enthusiastic hopes; not that new man, it is to be feared, 'which after Christ Jesus is created unto holiness.' What a different prospect does this afford to the humble and painstaking Christian, who, with all his strivings to persevere in a course of virtuous conduct, 'from his youth upwards,' and mortify his corrupt affections according to his baptismal covenant, finds it necessary, like St. Paul, 'to seek for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to keep his body in subjection, lest, after all, he should be a castaway.' He must either think himself mistaken in the spirit of the Gospel, or be ashamed of the abuse of his profession, when he reads those flaming accounts blazoned abroad by the agency of men whose zeal outstrips their knowledge, and who are more careful to proselytise than teach according to the form of godliness. Reasonable men cannot but be disgusted at such proceedings, whilst the profligate and vicious behold in them a plenary indulgence, of which they are active to avail themselves, and in which they gladly place as much credit as the deluded Papist does in the bull, which extends to him immunity from the consequences of the most flagitious crimes. In vain the solemn scenes

of the scaffold present a warning to the young the thoughtless, and the vicious. The place of execution becomes the pulpit from which vice derives some of its most encouraging lessons, and the dungeon's gloom irradiates evil propensities to their perpetration. The sight of a criminal paying his guilty life a forfeit to the offended laws of his country, and leaving behind him a character blackened by foulest stains, can excite but one sentiment, — of the justice of his doom, mingled with pity for his wretched end. But when we are told that his past life, stained, perhaps, with blood, has lost its blackness by the *conversion* * wrought within him after his condemnation at an earthly tribunal, (for it is rarely that any serious impression is produced before all human hopes are blighted,) what can we think of the divine justice? 'Shall we not then continue in sin, that grace may abound?' There is something so sickening in this delusion,

* This word would seem to be synonymous with a sudden transfiguration from vice to holiness, from death to life. It means in the language of modern cant, contrary to the sober language of the Gospel, an instantaneous change from a life of sin to a realization of those privileges of Christianity which are promised only to those "who, by a *patient continuance in well doing*, seek for honour, and glory, and immortality."

and so abhorrent from the spirit of the Gospel, which calls upon us to employ every energy, and 'be instant in season and out of season,' to 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,' that it is painful to dwell upon it. And yet it is the duty of every minister, more especially of our established apostolic church, to expose this gross delusion, and, like the Roman satirist, warn and point out, 'that is the black sheep, Christian, beware.' It is a mistaken feeling which prompts some, in order to soothe the last few hours of a dying criminal, to pamper him with false hopes, and obscure the justice of their heavenly Master, who, though he would not 'break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax,' has given us no warranty to pamper corruption at the expense of God's glory. From the same mistaken feeling, which deserves a harsher title, things come to change names; so that we frequently hear epithets applied to various delinquents which belong strictly to their opposite virtues, as if the display of one virtue could cancel the violation of all others, and the apostle's declaration were reversed, 'whosoever shall keep the

whole law, and yet offend in *one* point, he is guilty of *all.*' But so long as the eighth chapter of Romans retains its place in our Scriptures, the humble Christian will not dare to admit such delusion, that he may sin a while, and die repentant; or, that if he lives a life of habitual vice, he may leave this world with happy hopes, if for a few hours previous to his disgraceful exit he professes repentance, and becomes enthusiastic. And if the servant, who laid up his talent, was punished for not improving it, what shall they suffer who abuse it? who revel in iniquity till human laws arrest them, and who, in spite of their professions of repentance, made after their days are numbered, often die with a lie on their lips. Yet, let us not dissuade men in such circumstances from repentance, for without it they must be lost; with it, as with Simon Magus, 'their sins may perchance be forgiven.' It is to the abuse of such occasions that these observations are to be applied. It is not for us to limit the mercy of God; but whilst we shudder from exalting this at the expense of his justice, and exhort men to repentance, let us not lead them to put their

trust in a death-bed repentance; for, 'if the righteous (those who are in earnest about their salvation by obeying the commands of God, through faith in Christ,) are scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?'"

* 1 Peter iv. 18.

CHAP. XI.

PASTORAL VISITINGS.

PASTORAL VISITINGS.

On one occasion when the young men had called upon the Village Pastor, he asked them to accompany him in a few visits which he was on the point of making in his parish. He was one of those ministers, and there are more of this class than a censorious world will give credit to, who are not only prompt at every call, but who make it a part, and a most essential one too, of their duty to become intimately acquainted with their flock, by taking every opportunity of entering with interest into their several wants and necessities, in order that, whether possessed of worldly means or not, they may at all times be ready with their counsel and their consolations. Such a practice is mutually beneficial. To the peasant it affords a solace in distress, prepared and bestowed in the kindest manner; and they, who otherwise would have nothing but their own judgment and prejudices by which to be guided,

in many cases requiring great prudence and caution, have thus the benefit of men who, by their education and principles, are generally qualified to direct them in the way they should go, not only in temporal but in spiritual things. Whilst, therefore, the Village Pastor, who is in earnest in the discharge of his sacred functions, is ready with his maxims of prudence by which to moderate those who apply to him for assistance, he never loses sight of that bright object, set forth in his holy calling,—the salvation of souls. It is his care so to direct his flock in worldly things, that religious principles are inculcated and enforced; and thus, whilst he is providing for the body, he is not neglecting the infinitely more important concerns of the immortal soul. And whilst he is busily employed in directing others and exercising his spiritual calling, he is daily adding to his stock of experience, from which he may not only draw a supply at all times for the benefit of others, but which he may convert to his own advantage. A free and unrestrained intercourse between a minister and his parishioners cannot fail of being beneficial to both: they derive advantages great and important from him, and pay him back the blessing by

reflecting upon him the sunshine of a consciousness of duty, and a greater facility in the use of those weapons of the Christian warfare, which he is called upon continually to use. Hence, it will generally be found that they, who are most attentive to what may be called domesticity of parish duties, are both more acceptable to their people, more fluent in the composition of their sermons, and more prompt at all times "to give a reason for the hope that is in them," than others who are less active in those pastoral functions. Such was Mr. Stanhope: for any to be sick or afflicted was to him a sufficient reason for his immediate visitation, although uncalled. By this means his attention would gain him a cheerful hearing, which at the best would have been restrained, if not useless, had he waited to the general crisis when ministers are sent for,—the hour of death. In what a difficult situation are they then placed, both minister and patients; the former, perhaps, called to speak of comfort and encouragement contrary to the word of God, the latter having a retrospect of wilful and continued sins, with a prospect that must soon close upon them in the grave. Whilst, therefore, the con-

scientious Pastor, shrinking from a harsh judgment of his fellow-man, is nevertheless fearful of violating his commission, the struggling soul, panting for consolation, is entangled in its own bewilderings of sin, and has nothing but the uncovenanted mercy of God upon which to rely. Fully sensible of this awful truth, and inspirited by frequent experience, Mr. Stanhope omitted no opportunity of directing the healthy not to put off the day of grace, and of visiting at the very first any of his flock who were assailed with sickness. To guide the contrite sinner in the way of peace, gently to lead the trembling soul, and earnestly to encourage the sincere to continue in well doing, was to him a pleasure, a satisfaction, a joy beyond all reckoning. Oh! how such scenes tend to tranquillise the storms which will sometimes agitate the calmest bosom; with what encouragement do they animate the faithful steward of the mysteries of grace, to dispense the word in season and out of season, and what a bright example do they give of the purity, the strength, the heavenly consolations of "the faith as it is in Jesus." To behold a fellow-creature raised from distress and difficulties and going on pros-

perously in his secular calling, is a true gratification to the benevolent mind; but to witness a corresponding effect in spiritual things, is something infinitely more sublime; and to whom more truly than to the humble, but conscientious, parish-priest do such delights accrue,—delights which seem happily designed to bind by closer links the family of Christ. What wonder, then, that a pastor, such as Mr. Stanhope undoubtedly was, experienced an unfailing stimulus in the discharge of his parochial duties; and warmed by such principles he now set forth accompanied by his two young friends to visit Farmer Johnson. The exterior of his dwelling was an index of its inmates,—it was neatly modest: the little garden which separated it from the road was kept in trim order; and whilst the useful occupied the greater part, space was still found for a few flowers, which lined each side of the gravel-walk that led up to the doorway, partially hidden by clusterings of woodbine and roses. Farmer Johnson was one of that body of the community, who were once regarded as the pith of the country,

"When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;"

a class of people, to whom, however depreciated and lessened now, Goldsmith has paid this noble tribute:—

"Princes and lords may flourish and may fade,
A breath can make them as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied."

This man had been in comparatively easy circumstances, from which he had been reduced to great distress by various losses, and especially by the ravages of a malignant fever. He had several children all young, who were, therefore, not only unable to render him assistance, but were a heavy tax upon his exhausted means. For some time his life was despaired of, and though the malady passed its climax, it left his bodily strength so low and impaired, that he was unable to perform any work. The expenses incurred by this visitation had so reduced his finances, that he was compelled to sell his stock to great disadvantage, and but for the prompt interference of the Squire and Mr. Stanhope he must have come to that abhorrent state, subversive alike of virtue and indepen-

dence, — a pauper of the parish. By their assistance, however, he was continued in his farm, and furnished with some little means of getting forward. Though very weak he had returned to labour. The ravages of sickness were still visible in his spare frame and lengthened features; but there was at the same time an air of meekness and patient endurance about him, which rendered him an interesting object; and the unmurmuring resignation with which he bore his affliction heightened the sentiments of kindness, which the Pastor entertained for him. "He knew in whom he trusted." "The chastening of the Lord" had been sanctified to its intended purpose, as it always may be to those who receive afflictions as such. He acknowleged that it was the Lord's doing, and he found that his sickness, however grievous, was to him a blessing. From his enfeebled state he had been convinced of his own want of strength, and from the gracious assistance that had been supplied to him, he learned to depend more trustingly on the goodness and support of that Almighty Being, who calls himself our Father. His sickness had found him in some measure dross, but by its searching fire and

discriminating power it had purified and left him gold; for he had become, under the Lord's hand, more patient, more resigned, and more of a true Christian. Mr. Stanhope had been at some pains to direct his thoughts to their proper channel, and through the grace of God they now flowed in a simple, unmixed course. The visit of his Pastor was to him now a season of refreshment, and each recurrence of the Lord's day, the harbinger of rest and thanksgiving: his place in the church of his fathers again knew him, and the responses of the congregation were again augmented by his voice. His first attendance in public worship after his sickness was marked by his offering of thanks, (for during his illness he had requested the prayers of the church,) and this seemed to him still deficient till the opportunity came "of taking the cup of salvation, and calling on the name of the Lord," at the altar.

At the juncture when the Pastor and his young friends entered the cottage, Farmer Johnson and his wife were deeply engaged in serious conversation, which this visit opportunely regulated. She, notwithstanding the goodness of God in sparing her husband to recover his

strength, and raising them up friends in their greatest difficulties, was still very much disposed to distrust the good providence of the Most High, who had been so recently to her "her rock, her fortress, her defence." Her mind was gloomed by viewing the dispensations of her Maker "through a glass darkly," and by her acquiescence in the popular phrase of "what is to be, will be." Hence, at one time, her hopes were pitched beyond moderation, and at another her forebodings excluded comfort. There was nothing equal in her; subject to each extreme, her happiness rested on a broken reed, and her expectations were directed more by her fancyings than her principles. How different from her husband! His placidity, the result of afflictions sanctified, was a foil to her uneasy disposition; his resignation seemed more tranquil when contrasted with her querulousness; and his devout trust in God, arising from a lively faith, was rendered more conspicuous by the shadowings of her restless anticipations. He pitied her foibles, and strove by mildness and care to amend them, whilst they served as continual monitors to him of the frailty of human nature, and of the insufficiency of our own strength and

judgment to guide us in the way of peace. In the midst of a conversation of this kind, they were interrupted by the Pastor and his companions; the former of whom thus accosted them: —

"I thought as I entered that I overheard you engaged in serious conversation; might I ask what it was? I suppose it was on religion?"

"Why, yes," replied the farmer, "we were talking about religion. I have been out in the fields, and finding myself tired, my wife persuaded me to sit down and rest; and she, good woman! began to talk to me to comfort me; but I really believe, though she means well, she is one of Job's comforters, though I am no Job. So you see, Sir, we talked about my illness and our afflictions, and she said they were to be; and I said they had been, and that they were permitted by the Lord, because, Sir, you remember that the last time I was at church, your sermon was about the Lord ordering all things, and that he allows such things to happen to us to 'try us in the furnace of affliction,' as the Scriptures tell us; and that if we receive his chastisements with patience, as sinners, 'he will make the bones that were broken speak of

joy and thankfulness.' And then my wife observed, that somehow she always thought, when I was bad, something would come to help us; and so it was, for the good old Squire, just after he had lost Madam, and yourself came and helped us, or else we must have come to the poor-house, and I would rather have died than that."

"And did no one else help you?" enquired the Pastor.

"Nobody, Sir: — Oh, yes! I ought not to forget God helped us, and gave us strength, and visited us with comfort, or else we never could have done. He is a gracious God, and hears our prayers; and though my wife is sometimes fearful, and doubts about what is to come, yet when I look backwards to what has already come, I see no reason to distrust his goodness; for I have always found, and so has she, that He will help us as far as we need, and what more can we want? Isn't that right?"

"Certainly. You know what St. James says, 'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man;' and St. Paul has also written for our comfort, 'He will

with the temptation supply the means by which ye may escape.' Besides, we are also further comforted by this gracious assurance, that 'our light afflictions are intended to work in us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' When, therefore, afflictions come upon us, 'we should account it all joy,' as the Apostle exhorts us, because they are designed by our merciful God to work in us his good pleasure, so that, 'forgetting the things which are behind, we may press forward to those which are before.'—But what did she object to all this?"—"Why, Sir, she did not exactly object to it; but still, she said she was afeard, that because I did not get my strength so fast as we could wish, we should have to undergo greater sufferings yet, and that we should never be able to pay back what you lent us." Here the young Squire was on the point of saying something to the Pastor, when he was anticipated by a sign from him, which indicated that all was right. "But I keep telling my wife," continued the farmer, "to take courage, and trust in God, 'for he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever,' and that he will hear *all* who call upon him. Now she said, she didn't know that; for she had heard and

read, that He chooses some and not others, and has mercy upon whom he likes, and hates others; which, she said, was proved by hardening Pharaoh, and not forgiving Esau, though he tried for it even with bitter repentance. I was trying to convince her she should not think so, when you came in; and I am glad you did, for, you know, Sir, I like so much to hear you talk, for you always speak so mildly, and, as I think, so like what a Christian minister should do, with so much charity for all, and with such reverence for God, that you oftentimes remind me of what the angels sung at the birth of our Saviour, 'Glory to God on high, on earth peace, good will towards men.'"—"I hope," replied Mr. Stanhope, "I speak as all ministers do; and I only wish that I were better able to declare the infinite mercy and love of God; for that is a subject upon which I delight to dwell, and which I fain would impress upon all my flock, that they 'may love God for the love with which he has loved them!'" Then, turning to the woman, he continued, "Do you really think that God will not hear you when you call upon him from your heart?"

"I sometimes think so," she replied; "and

sometimes I think differently: at present I am inclined to believe that God will only hear and accept some, because I met one of my cousins yesterday, who lives about seven miles off, and is a preacher, and he tried to convince me, that unless God had elected me, it was all no use my trying; for that 'he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens;' and then he recommended me to read about Pharaoh, and, sure enough, I read that God hardened his heart, and punished him after all."

"See here," said the Pastor, turning to Mr. Harley, "the effects, however abused or misunderstood, of the doctrines about which so much is now said with so little either of 'glory to God or good will to man.'" Then, addressing himself to the woman, he added, "My good dame, I know that you are a nervous woman, and that consequently you are in greater danger of mistaking bodily infirmities for spiritual weakness, than if you were strong in health. You should not let your thoughts dwell upon the 'secret things of God,' for they are too high for the comprehension of any understanding however exalted. You must rather accus-

tom yourself to the consideration of the promises of grace, and mercy, and encouragement which God holds out in his word for the comfort of all, particularly of those who are of a humble spirit, and of a contrite heart. Look upon your Almighty God as a kind and indulgent parent, 'who will have compassion upon the ignorant, and feeble, and distressed;' for, 'like as a father pitieth his children, even so does the Lord pity us:' he knows also whereof we are made, and will, if we 'draw nigh to him, draw nigh to us.' Do not, therefore, think of him as you would of a man, a capricious being, liable to partiality and wrong judgment as we are, 'for his ways are equal.' Endeavour to consider him as a father, a friend, a comforter, a God of kindness, full of compassion and long-suffering, and always more ready to hear than we are to pray."

The farmer here clasped his hands, and raising his eyes to heaven, breathed out, "Blessed be God!"

Mr. Stanhope continued, "Let me recommend you to let your thoughts dwell upon the free and universal redemption of Jesus Christ; (Mr. Harley here lifted up his eyebrows as if

to say, I doubt this assertion;) the exceeding great love of God, and the sanctification of his Holy Spirit, promised to all who ask for it. Believe all this; believe that Christ 'died for your sins, and rose again for your justification;' that 'God would have *all men* to be saved;' that 'he wills not the death of a sinner;' that 'he is reconciled to us in Christ;' that 'with him he will freely give us all things;' that he will send us the help of his Holy Spirit, and enable those who desire, to 'walk worthy of their vocation.' In this view you cannot but love God for all his goodness and mercy, and trust in his power and grace; and that you may not consider afflictions as marks of his displeasure, remember, 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' You have already had proof of this. —Look at your husband, and confess that the Lord is gracious. Consider your condition, how much better it is than it might have been, and then thankfully acknowledge without doubting, for in such cases doubt is ingratitude, and ingratitude is sin, that 'he has not dealt with you according to your sins, neither rewarded you according to your iniquities.' Let then your

faith cast out fear; and be assured that 'the terrors of the Lord' are only used when gentler means fail. Pharaoh, about whom you were reading, and whom your kinsman recommended you to consider as an instance of reprobation made by God, may serve as a proof of this. He was visited by plagues only so long as his obstinacy prevailed, for when he relented they were removed; and not till he again made himself hardened to the will of God were they returned upon him, till at length becoming, through his own obstinacy, wholly reprobate, he suffered the punishment due to his impenitent conduct. God did not harden his heart, unless the removing of the plagues upon his repentance, which he converted into occasion of future sins, may be taxed upon God as a hardening. In like manner, Sodom and Gomorrah were not consumed till every means had failed, which had been used to bring them to repentance. The world was not destroyed by the deluge, till righteousness had become extinct in all, except Noah and his family. The nations of Canaan were not swept away by the Israelites (who were kept long in Egypt till the time came) before 'the measure of their iniquity was full;' nor were the Jews

scattered over the face of the earth till they had rejected every warning, and more than filled the vial of wrath, by crucifying the Messiah, persecuting his apostles, and giving themselves up wholly to the evils of a reprobate heart. Thus, you see, whenever the Lord has executed any remarkable judgment, it has been absolutely called for by the gross wickedness of those upon whom he has inflicted his punishment. But, on the other hand, how gracious and merciful is he to all who call upon him. Remember how God heard the prayer of David, who confesses, 'I called upon the Lord in trouble, and the Lord heard me at large.' Did he not also hear Jonah, even from the whale's belly, and Daniel from the lion's den? The cry of Job was attended to, though it ascended from a dunghill; and the prayer of the thief was accepted, though breathed on the cross. Why, then, should *you* doubt? Is he not a very present help in trouble? And if he be found by those who seek him not, how much more by those who do seek him? Thousands, in all ages, have found him not the terrible Judge, but the compassionate Father, the pitying Saviour; not the stern punisher of their undeservings, but the benevo-

lent benefactor and their supporter under all difficulties. This, then, ought to encourage you to look up to him with the eye of hope, and fill your heart with the strong confidence of faith, that 'you will never be moved,' but supported by Him, and guided by his Holy Spirit, nothing shall come near to hurt you."—"Oh, dear Sir," exclaimed the husband, "how comforting are your words. I hope my dame will take notice of them, and lay them up in her heart, and, I am sure, she will find herself made more happy by them. I am satisfied, Sir, that all my hope is in the merits of my Saviour and the mercy of my God; but I also believe that this will not save me, unless I also 'strive to make my calling and election sure.'"—"Ever cherish such sentiments, my good fellow," replied the Pastor, "and you will not greatly fall. Trust in God and the redemption of his Son, and strive in all things to do your duty as far as you can, and the Holy Spirit will help you to do that which is good and acceptable in the sight of Heaven. Yes, and you too, my good dame, if you act in the same manner."

Returning homewards, they were overtaken by one of those sudden showers which occasionally

fall in the autumnal season; this compelled them to take shelter in the cottage of an aged couple, who had ascended the hill of life together, and were now drawing near to the valley of the shadow of death. Their lives had been marked by simplicity and integrity, and their declining hours were cheered by the retrospect of years, usefully spent and employed in the purposes of their creation. Religion was with them a governing principle, and the glory of God the object of all their actions. Ever calm, resigned, and tranquil, all events found them the same, neither elated by things pleasurable, nor depressed by untoward circumstances. They knew, and were convinced, that life is short, and eternity long, and that however afflicted is our condition in this world, that which is to come, if properly prepared for, will more than compensate every sorrow, and reward every struggle. Their aged countenances were the reflection of their souls. Cheerfulness, the mirror of a mind fixed on the thing that is right, shed a perpetual sunshine around them, and gilded their days with peace and tranquillity. Like the calm of evening which succeeds a day of serenity, and is remarkable for an unruffled placidity that diffuses its influence on every sur-

rounding object, the twilight of their age had all the freshness of youth mellowed by the experience of days gone by. They were great favourites with the Pastor and his family, and were esteemed by all the parish as models of piety. As two oaks which have stood majestically a long series of years are regarded as objects of respect and veneration, so these patriarchs, for to that appellation their age and virtues entitled them, were esteemed for their years and worth.

During the storm which had driven the Pastor and his friends into their cottage, much conversation passed among them, which showed most plainly that God was in all their thoughts, and animated all their reflections. There were two things which particularly attracted the attention of Mr. Harley. Speaking of the many trials which they had encountered during their long pilgrimage, old Dame Smith observed, that she and her old man had never experienced real want, but that God had ever supplied their necessities; making out the truth of that part of the Lord's Prayer, which was always her rock of comfort, "Give us this day our daily bread." "This has been the case, Sir, always,

and I thank my God, that he has never shut his ears against our petitions when we have called upon him in faith." The other remark which she made arose from the circumstance of the storm, which as it was passing over was succeeded by a rainbow. "Ay, Sir," said she, "that is just what I have experienced very many times. In all my difficulties and troubles, I have always had reason to hope, that God's providence would provide something to put an end to my distresses; like the rainbow, Sir, which you know God has appointed for a sign, that however fast it rains, it will soon be fair weather." When the storm had passed over, they took their departure; and at their arrival at the Parsonage, Mr. Stanhope begged to be excused for a few minutes. On his return he had a small paper in his hand, from which, after prefacing, that he hoped they had not forgotten old Dame Smith's observation, he read the following

STANZAS ON THE RAINBOW.

The rising winds a gathering storm portend;
The blacken'd sky surcharged with pent-up rain,
Seems resting on the hills, prompt to descend
When falls the gale.

See! now it comes amain!
The spreading deluge inundates the plain,
And all is water round:—yet fear ye not,
For lo! bright streaming colours which disdain
Man's copying art, rest on the brighten'd cot,
And prove mid burst of storms God's promise not forgot.

As in the nat'ral, so the moral world!
Tho' man thro' trials and distresses roam,
Hope's lovely bow, by Faith's bright glass unfurl'd,
Invites him onward to his native home.
In vale or mountain, cot or stately dome,
Where'er the heart on heavenly things is bent,
Let dangers thicken and afflictions come,
Or Grief's artillery on him be spent,
The Christian stands unmoved, in weal or woe content.

CHAP. XII.

A RECAPITULATION.

A RECAPITULATION.

On every opportunity the young Squire and Mr. Harley were at the Parsonage. Interested, as the latter had been, in the Pastor's favour, by the many reports his friend had given him of his excellency and worth, he found his esteem for him rise on every occasion of their meeting. There was so much soundness of understanding about him, — such a disposition to benefit others without obtruding himself upon them, — such suavity of manners irradiated by the perpetual sunshine of cheerfulness, — such attention to the wants both bodily and spiritual of his flock, and such a charitable construction of the errors, or supposed mistakes of others, — that he congratulated himself upon meeting with so valuable an associate, whom he hoped to be allowed to consider his friend. The continual collision with either good or bad necessarily makes a corresponding impression upon us, especially

upon the young. The habitual cheerfulness of the Pastor, lively without levity, and pleasant without compromising his character, had the effect of gradually dissipating the moodiness of Mr. Harley, whilst his benevolence and Christian charity, active without ostentation, opened his heart to the entertainment of more extended views of the mercy of God, and of a more tender opinion of his race in general. He began to find a wavering of sentiment on that subject which had engrossed his attention so much, and with so little of real advantage, that it had spread a gloom over his brow, and contracted the better feelings of his heart. Though he professed Calvinism to its full extent, yet he was not insensible to the many inconsistencies which chequer its character; and at times, even in the season of his deepest attachment to it, there was a something which he could not reconcile He had discussed this subject in all its bearings and forms with Mr. Stanhope, and received the first shock to his adherence, from the conversation he held with him on the seventeenth article, in which, as in all other discussions, the arguments of the Village Pastor, advanced with temperance and good will, and

reflected as they were from his daily conversation and conduct, were not without their effect. Still, however, he clung, though with a shattered hold, to the opinions and doctrines which had been engrafted on his mind at a time when it was afflicted, cheerless, and sad, and which, in consequence, had spread over it a cloudiness of thinking and judging that threw his other amiable qualities into the shade, and prevented the sunshine of his better principles from irradiating his heart, conversation, and conduct, with that beam of good will to man, which can only emanate from pure love to God. These clouds, like those seen by the prophet, at first small, had progressively darkened, and but for the timely intervention of Mr. Stanhope, would have stripped him entirely of all "that goodly and sweet consideration of the will of God" mentioned in the seventeenth article. Happy for him, that whilst some twilight still remained, he met with the Village Pastor. Like the approach of day, the first faint dawn of light, though glimmering seen in distant perspective, as it nearer draws, shines broader and brighter, and more glorious, till nature owns with joyfulness and pleasure the full influence of the risen

sun. So was it in some measure with him. The blackness of the clouds vanished, and as the deeper shades rolled away, so did his mind become more elastic, and his conversation more cheerful. There dimpled now a smile, though faint, where lately lurked a gloom, and hope illumined where doubt had darkened. But all this, though still defective, was progressive; nor need it be wondered if occasionally a deeper shadow fell upon him; but it was now a visitor not an inmate. His peculiar sentiments, imbibed as they had been under afflicting circumstances, were not to be eradicated easily; neither did the Pastor suppose that he could thoroughly change his opinions; his only aim was to meliorate his thoughts, and direct them to more tempered and rational meditations. In this he happily succeeded. Nor was this change lightly brought about. It had cost the young man much consideration and perplexity, nor had he failed to address his frequent and earnest prayers to that Gracious Being, who alone being himself the truth, could guide and direct him to the truth. Perhaps the two examples he had witnessed, the one in the wretched stranger, and the other in the poor farmer's wife, had

not a little assisted the arguments of the Pastor. In both these instances he had seen what difficulty and mischief, the pondering upon the dark and impenetrable question of predestination produces. He was convinced, from the case of the woman, how it genders upon either despair or presumption in the sincere; and from the wretched stranger, how vice avails itself of the cloud of fate, by which to screen its enormities. In reference to the opinions of the former, and her argument taken from Pharaoh, the Pastor had endeavoured to divest the question of all its (may I use the term?) mechanism. He pointed out to him the various points of his character, and the particular situation in which he was placed; from all which he inferred, that he was a bold, bad man, whose long habits of iniquity, indurated by his temporal power, and the contempt in which he held the Israelites, produced in him a reprobation, which no terror could awe, and no mildness soothe into a conviction of his obduracy, or a sense of the superior power of the Most High, manifested in behalf of the sojourners of Goshen. It was this habit of vice and trusting to his own mightiness, and to the agency of his magicians, which made

him a monster of iniquity, and steeled him against all visitations that might have awakened him to virtue, and taught him submission. The narrative which records his obduracy proves this. For, although the Lord in commissioning Moses to go to him, said, "I will harden his heart," yet this may be attributed to his prescience rather than to his everlasting purpose or predestination; or to his immutable purpose of punishing all those who, rejecting the means of grace offered to them, should give themselves up to work wickedness, and obstinately persist in the way of ungodliness. For, in the account of the different visitations by which he made known his power to the Egyptians, we do not find the hardening of Pharaoh's heart ascribed to God, but to himself, until the miracle of boils and blains, which fell eqnally upon the magicians, to whose agency he trusted, and proved them to be but vain. This might have convinced any ordinary person of the feeble reed in which he put confidence, and the irresistible power to which he stood obnoxious. The displays of God's power and might, followed as they were by a relaxation upon his repentance, were to his corrupt and ungrateful

mind so many additional reasons of his obstinacy, as the learned and argumentative T. Jackson has said: "Means of repentance sincerely offered by God, but wilfully rejected by man, concur as positively to induration of heart, as the heating of water doth to the quick freezing of it, when it is taken off the fire and set in the cold air." * After this, as all human or ordinary means failed, it is said "the Lord hardened his heart;" that is, he gave him up to that state of reprobation which his own vicious conduct had necessarily entailed upon him, who was now "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." For "the Lord will not always strive with man." His justice must be satisfied, and set limits to his mercy, otherwise it ceases to be justice. That Pharaoh had the power to repent, we learn from the narrative itself; for whilst under the visitation of the frogs, the flies, the tempest, the locusts, and others of the troubles which his obduracy brought upon him, he showed a relentingness, in spite of his hardened habits, inconsistent with that induration which he could not avoid, if he had been pre-

* See his works, vol. iii. book x. chap. 42.

destined to it. This proves at once how reprobate he had become, that even such awful displays of a superior power could only sway him from his purpose whilst he was suffering under them; and his recurring disobedience is a warning to us that we should not set our hearts on sin and its evil practices, least the day of grace shine, but shine on us in vain. The Pastor therefore concluded, that after such displays of obstinacy and impenitency, the Lord withdrew from him altogether his grace, and gave him over to the hardness of a reprobate heart, and did not immediately destroy him, but suspended over him his righteous judgment till the season came, that its infliction might be more signal, and the glory of his name rendered more illustrious, both among the Gentiles and his own people. For the term used by the Apostle, "I have raised thee up," means rather "a supporting or continuing power," under circumstances which might, in the general course of things, have endangered his throne, by exposing him to the anger of his people, smarting under the plagues sent upon them through the obduracy of their king. Accordingly, we do not find any murmuring

on the part of his people, any attempt to sway him from his purpose, by rebellious or disobedient conduct, and once only did his servants remonstrate with him. So that it would seem, he was supported in his kingly power by some invisible and extraordinary means, not encouraged or driven by an arbitrary decree to his hardness of heart, which he must have been, had he been predestined to such obduracy. For then, even from his birth he was accursed, and when a child, and "spake as a child, and thought as a child," he was not only guilty of original sin, but doomed to everlasting punishment before he had committed any actual sin, in consequence of the decree of reprobation registered against him from all eternity, even before there were in existence either men or angels. This would be indeed a hard sentence; and yet it is one which Calvin's position goes to enforce, when he says, that "all are not born in an equal condition," but that "to some eternal life, to others eternal damnation, is preordained."

"I would rather," observed Mr. Stanhope, "coincide with a former president of Christ Church, Oxford, the Rev. T. Jackson, who says,

'That cruelty which in his full age he practised was not so contained in his infancy, as poison is in the serpent's egg. It did not grow up by kind or *necessity* of his natural temper; much less was it infused by *God's irresistible will*; but acquired by voluntary custom. The seeds of it were sown by his own self-will; ambitious pride was the root; politic jealousy was the bud; tyranny and oppression the fruit. Neither was it necessary, by the eternal decree, that this corrupt seed should be sown; or that being sown, it should prosper and bud; or that after the budding it should ripen in malignity. During all this progress from bad to worse, the immediate *object* of God's immutable and *unresistible will* was mutability in Pharaoh (that is, as he explains himself elsewhere, the mutual possibility of becoming *a vessel of mercy*, or *a vessel of wrath*). But this progress which was not *necessary* by any eternal decree or law, being *de facto* once (at length) accomplished, his destruction was inevitable, his induration unresistible, his reprobation irrecoverable, by the eternal and uncontrollable decree.'

"But laying all these considerations aside, and granting that Pharaoh was raised up for the ex-

press purpose of being hardened, that in his hardness Jehovah might show forth his power, this particular case, under such particular circumstances, cannot be adduced as establishing a general rule of the dealings of the Most High with men, any more than the deluge, or the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, or the expulsion of the Canaanites, may be advanced as arguments against the mercy of God. This instance of predestined reprobation (supposing it true) may rather be looked upon as an exception to the general dispensation of Heaven, than laid down as a rule by which the secret will of God is to be estimated. It no more breaks the general chain of his economy, than the miracles performed by Moses and Jesus Christ disarrange permanently the order of nature. When Moses divided the waters of the Red Sea, they returned to their place after the Israelites had passed through; and though Christ turned water into wine at the marriage-feast, yet it does not follow that all waters should afterwards be wine. In like manner, though God raised up Pharaoh and hardened his heart, it was for a particular purpose, interesting the welfare not only of a whole nation, but a

whole universe. The Israelites had forgotten the true God; they had forsaken his ways, and remembered not his promises; they were contaminated with the pollutions of Egypt, and nothing less than 'a mighty hand and stretched out arm' could emancipate them as well from temporal bondage as mental debasement; whilst, therefore, their deliverance from so powerful a prince as Pharaoh was calculated to convince them of the almighty power of their Jehovah, the hardening of his heart was a warning to them against such obduracy, lest they also should perish.* Whilst, therefore, the dividing of the Red Sea, the elision of water from the rock, the economy of manna, the preservation of their garments from waxing old, and other extraordinary circumstances which attended them, were miracles in the natural, the case of Pharaoh was a miracle, that is, an uncommon event, in the spiritual world. This solves all difficulties: it vindicates the mercy of God, and

* If the hardening of Pharaoh be alleged as proof of God's election to reprobation, the sinful conduct of the Israelites, so pointedly and frequently reprehended by Jehovah, must stand as an antidote to that doctrine. Their frequent rebellions, after the signal mercies which they had received, either argue in them a power to resist God's will, or devolve upon him a charge which no reflecting, much less a Christian, mind dares avow.

stands an eternal lesson to man. Such also might be (supposing the hypothesis of Calvin to be right) the case of Esau, and any other especial instance of the power of God, in making known his glory and mightiness, that men might fear his name, and hence derive the beginning of wisdom. And in the calling of Abraham we find an instance of election to favour, more distinguished, perhaps, than any other recorded in the volume of Inspiration, inasmuch as in him all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Yet who will say that God's election made him faithful? Was not his call rather a trial of his faith? and on every repetition of his constancy, the promise was reiterated more plainly and extensively. And if God's election of him compelled him to act with such unswerving faith, how does it happen, that when his trust in Jehovah had been tried to the quick, in his being called upon not only to sacrifice his only son, the child of promise, the joy of his old age, but to be himself the executioner, the Angel of the Lord, who stayed his uplifted hand, which already grasped 'the knife to slay his son,' and arrested him from his purpose, said, '*Now*, I know that

thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me?' Why should the messenger of Jehovah, probably the Messiah himself, have said, *Now I know*, if the purpose were already fixed in Heaven, and the decree had already gone forth which left him no choice, but made him faithful, whether he would or no. Surely such circumstances as these are overlooked by those who ascribe, with Calvin, a preordination to death or life, according to the purpose of God, without any regard whatever to the being so predestined? It is vain to argue that all men have deserved God's wrath, and that, therefore, it is no violation of his love and justice, if he choose some and reject others; since what comfort can this be to the reprobate? How does this clothe their Maker with mercy*, if to them, before they were born, the gates of mercy were shut, and they excluded from the very means of grace? How much better, wiser, and more humble is it for us to receive the plain promises of the Gospel, which make eter-

* J. Wesley says: "Such blasphemy destroys all God's attributes at once; it overturns both his justice, mercy, and truth. Yes, it represents the Most Holy God as worse than the devil; as more false, more cruel, and more unjust." This is strong language, but it is supported by weighty arguments.

nal life conditional, and assign salvation through Christ to those who in faith have done good works, to the performance of which, *all*, without respect of persons, are invited and encouraged? These promises can have but one interpretation; they are plain, simple, and admit of no doubt;—whilst every passage advanced in support of irrespective predestination is, to say the least, capable of a double interpretation. Whether, then, is it more consonant with the simplicity of the Gospel to receive its plain promises without questioning, or to exact as points of belief those secret things which can be known certainly to God alone? The answer is obvious. We *cannot err*, if we follow the plain revealed will of God; we *may possibly fail*, if we aim to understand what is above our comprehension. Cowper, therefore, has well said, in 'The Progress of Error,'

> "'Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
> From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
> Free in his will to choose or to refuse,
> Man may improve the crisis, or abuse;
> Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
> Say to what bar amenable were man?'"

With such observations did the Pastor reason with Mr Harley, who, in reply, said, "that

this solution could not apply to all cases, especially to some recorded in the New Testament. To what, but to election," said he, "can be attributed the difference between Peter and Judas, who both forsook their Master? one denied, the other betrayed him; and yet one was received again into favour, whilst the other was rejected." To this the Pastor briefly replied, "Peter repented as soon as he sinned, and manifested his repentance, 'by going out and weeping bitterly.' Judas waited some time before he felt conviction; and then, instead of real repentance, 'he hanged himself,' thus making 'his latter end worse than the first.' Peter sought for pardon, and found it; the other despaired, and added self-murder to treachery. There is, therefore, a wide difference between these disciples, created by themselves. The church thus speaks of them in the second part of the sermon on repentance: 'How chance that the one was received into favour again with God, and the other cast away; but because, that the one did, by a lively faith in him whom he had denied, take hold upon the mercy of God, and the other wanted faith, whereby he did despair of the goodness and mercy of God.'

"The venerable martyr, Latimer, in his sermon on the Epistle for the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity, says, 'Christ shed as much blood for Judas as he did for Peter. Peter believed it, and therefore he was saved. Judas *would* not believe, and therefore he was condemned, the fault being in him only, in nobody else.'"

And in the case of the penitent thief, which is by some considered as an instance of predestination to Paradise, in spite of a life of sin, the Pastor observed, "that there was circumstances in his conduct which can never exist in any other, unless the Saviour can again be suspended on the accursed tree, between two malefactors, and one of them be so struck with the conviction of his innocency and their guilt, as to manifest, in his repentance, all the characteristics of godliness, confession, faith, and works, of which the Homily on Good Works, part i., says, 'Faith may not be naked without good works, for then it is no more faith.' And in the same Homily, it is clear, there is no idea entertained of the thief's irrespective election and final perseverance, had life been continued to him, for we read in the words of Chrysostom, 'The thief that was hanged when

Christ suffered did believe only, and the most merciful God justified him. And because no man shall say that he lacked time to do good works, for else he would have done them, truth it is, and I will not contend therein, but this I will surely affirm, that faith only saved him. If he had lived and not regarded faith, and the works thereof, he should *have lost his salvation again.*' "

CHAP. XIII.

RETRIBUTION.

RETRIBUTION.

Miss Gainsford had now been eight months usefully employed in her humble avocation, when a circumstance transpired which called upon her for as great an exertion of fortitude, as the bitterest of her trials had previously done. It is, perhaps, more difficult to bear a sudden change from gloom to sunshine, and from affliction to happiness, than the reverse of these conditions. The reason perhaps is, the human mind is more habituated to suffering than enjoyment, and life itself is rather a scene of trials than pleasure. That, therefore, which forms the most striking exception to the general economy, is most likely to produce a corresponding effect. Hence we see many, whom adversity failed to move from their purpose, and who have stood inflexible to the trials, the sacrifices, the humiliation which misfortunes showered upon them, enervated by prosperity, and overcome by success. Like the traveller in the fable, the more violently blows the tem-

pest of affliction, the closer they fold themselves up in the mantle of their integrity, or patience; but when the sun of pleasure, or glory, darts its beams intensely upon them, they relax their hold, and inadvertently expose themselves to the first blast that may afterwards assail them. His is a truly great mind, which can rise without wavering from poverty to riches, from suffering to enjoyment; and he is more to be commended who passes through the ordeal of wealth and its attendant enticements without drinking the Circean cup, than he who keeps on unshrinkingly in the paths of poverty and its concomitant ills. Yet as in storms we look for sunshine to succeed, and as in a calm wisdom forebodes a storm, so should we always bear in mind the maxim which experience taught the Roman poet: —

" A heart prepared, with hope's bright ray
" Gilds the dark hour, in happier day
" Dreads change." *

It was a happy circumstance for Julia, that this lesson had been impressed upon her heart, from higher and diviner sources, which enforce

* See Wrangham's Lyrics of Horace, Ode x. book ii.

a steadfast trust in God; hence, during her term of probation, she was preparing herself to receive a happier change, without however indulging in hopes which flatter but to deceive. For,

" as the stone
" That sheds awhile a lustre all its own,
" Making night beautiful,"*

so did her trust in the merciful dispensations of the Most High cheer her darker hours, and prepare her for a circumstance which promised to scatter all causes of her suffering.

She was sitting one evening after tea (for the hours appointed for meals in a farmhouse are early), in a pleasant, but rustic kind of embowering shade in one corner of the garden, her favourite haunt when disengaged from her other duties, communing with her own thoughts, which were on this occasion elevated above their usual tranquillity from comparing the present with the past, and from anticipations of the future. She was, indeed, in a more than commonly happy frame of mind, which she attributed partly to the repose she had enjoyed

* Rogers's Human Life.

during the past night, but more particularly to the influence and tranquillizing effect experienced on the preceding day, from participating in the communion of the church, which seemed to diffuse insensibly through her heart a serenity and composure beyond human acquisition. Her thoughts were now more buoyant, and she felt induced to indulge her pleasing reverie by altering some stanzas on Hope which had been given her in happier days, to suit her present situation and views.

Oh! how I love thy heavenly smiles,
Whose influence care's dark frowns beguiles,
And sets affliction's sorrows free —
Oh beam, divinely beam on me,
Hope, sweet Hope.

She, loveliest ray of pitying heaven,
To man in every station given,
Alike the peasant's heart inspires,
And wealth with kindred longings fires,
Hope, sweet Hope.

Whate'er of ills this world betides,
She to its haven sweetly guides,
And redolent of Christian love,
Directs our purest thoughts above,
Hope, sweet Hope.

Linked with her sister, who shall say
That erring is her flowery way?
Or who, led on by thee, shall miss
The immortal crown of heavenly bliss,
Hope, sweet Hope?

That crown for those reserved who wait
Unchanged in every varying state,
By Faith supported, Love inspired,
And thy endearing prospects fired,
Hope, sweet Hope.

Joyful my heart reverts to thee,
For when our joys are mockery,
And worldly pleasures cheat and fail,
Thou bidst us look beyond this vale,
Hope, sweet Hope.

Look even to that rock of might,
In woe a shield, in joy a light,
Whose power to cheer and to protect
Through thee I cease not to expect,
Hope, sweet Hope.

In all my trials still beguile
My bitter griefs with thy dear smile,
And set me from affliction free,
That I may ever joy in thee,
Hope, sweet Hope.

The paper laid before her, moistened with tears, when she felt a gentle tap on the shoulder, and looking up beheld Mr. Stanhope. He smiled upon her, and unwonted cheerfulness beamed in his looks. He took a seat near her, and seizing one of her hands begged to know the subject of her contemplation. She pointed to the stanzas. He read them with attention, and returning the paper said, "I am rejoiced, my dear Miss Gainsford, to find your thoughts so well and pleasantly occupied. The hope you have here indulged is, I trust, the presentiment of something propitious hovering over you. For you must remember, that you are under the protection of a gracious God and merciful Father, who can 'wipe tears off all faces,' and 'give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' He orders all things for good in the end, and can, if he sees fit, order them for our present enjoyment. In distress we know not how close at hand is relief, neither in happiness how care is nestling near us. They who trust in Him may always hope for the best. Perhaps at this very moment you, who have in respect of this world for some time to

come a dark prospect, may be on the verge of great blessings. In short, my dear young friend, knowing the strength of your mind, I do not hesitate to say, that a trial awaits you of joy and unexpected happiness."

She looked at him with earnestness, her bosom heaved, the tear started into her eye, and in an agitated voice almost stifled with contending emotions, she entreated him to relieve her suspense.

"Your fondest hopes are at length likely to be realized. Your own heart tells you Stirling is innocent, and the world shall also be convinced of it. Providence is now unravelling the web which villany had wound to entangle your Henry in ruin. I possess the clue to prove him innocent."

"You? you? — How? For the love of heaven tell, oh tell me."

She could no more. The intelligence was too powerful to be borne, bursting as it did upon her at once. The gush of joy overwhelmed her. The conflict of emotions within her breast was like a torrent pent up in some narrow pass, gurgling, foaming, chafing; at length the barrier gives way, and the unob-

structed waters flow on peacefully. To have looked upon her pallid countenance, and marked her close-shut eye, one might have thought that life had fled, had not the heaving of her breast "almost to bursting," and the throbbings of her heart, now beating tumultuously, and now suspended by the violence of the gush, proved that animation still remained, poised in a violent struggle. At length the gurgling of her throat melted into a piercing "Oh dear!" and the pent up tears burst through their lovely barriers, and flowed in fast profusion down her blanched cheeks, like rain drops channeling the pale rose, and calling forth its sweetness palled by too much sunshine.

"'I possess the clue to prove him innocent.' Repeat, I beseech you, these astounding words. Tell me, can you prove him innocent? You, my Pastor, my Guide, my Friend. O heavenly Father, this is thy doing; make, O make me thankful. Come, (she continued with a smile that played radiantly on her countenance, now lit up by animation,) come, unite with me, and assist me to offer up the firstlings of my gratitude to Him 'who has indeed ordered all things for the best.'" She threw herself on her

knees, and was followed in the same spirit by the Pastor. Her prayer, which was expressed in grateful aspirations of the heart, not in words, rose like holy incense from the altar, and as it ascended became more and more purified, and was presented at "the throne of grace," acceptably, by Him who sits there our mediator, "God blessed for ever!" With soul more collected, the Pastor poured forth his offerings in gratitude for another's joy, and was blessed in the deed. Both rose refreshed and tranquillized from their holy, though silent communings. The gush of joy rushed on less rapidly, but its pleasant streams, dewed with their exhilarating influence the grateful heart of the wondering Julia. The fact that her Henry could now be exculpated to the world so engrossed her mind, that the means which led to the elucidation of the truth, lost, in her present state of surcharged happiness, much of their interest.

It will be remembered * that the attention of the Pastor and his two young friends was one evening suddenly arrested, and their humanity called forth by an accident

* Chapter x.

occasioned to a man from the falling of his horse. This man was properly attended to, and for some time he appeared to be recovering. The Pastor frequently visited him, but failed to elicit from him anything relative to himself, neither did he succeed much better in drawing from him any conversation on religion; the man listened to him with something between indifference and attention; he opposed no objection to be visited, but rather encouraged it, yet there was a reserve which baffled the Pastor's penetration, and frustrated any, as he thought, spiritual good. Once, indeed, when he was dilating on the rich mercies and exceeding love of God, and his knowledge of all things, an emotion was excited in the invalid, and a tear stole down his cheek, which he hastily brushed away with the back of his hand, as if ashamed of his weakness. And on another occasion, when he was reading to him Psalm xxxv., a gloominess settled on his forehead, his teeth grinded together, and he started, as if a sudden pain had shot through his heart, which caused him to groan, when the Pastor read the eleventh and twelfth verses: "False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge

things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul." To the Pastor's remark he answered by ascribing it to the violence of his suffering.

At the expiration of a month he was able to move about by the help of a crutch, which one day slipped from under him, and pitched him with all his weight against the corner of a chair; alarmed by the noise of the fall, a servant immediately hastened to the room and found him bleeding profusely from a wound near the right temple, which, though of itself not dangerous, revived all the bad effects of his former fall, and brought on symptoms which made the medical attendant fearful of consequences. A sleepless and feverish night followed, and the nurse who sat up with him occasionally heard mutterings of "dark and slippery is their way," and "destruction is come upon me unawares."* At times his reason wavered, and his eyes rolled about, as searching for some object, which when seen made them shrink from the gaze, and sounds of uneasy import burst from him. But nothing distinct was heard, save "Master be-

* Psalm xxxv. 6.

trayed, innocent." These words were told by the nurse to the Pastor, who was sent for early the following morning at the express desire of the man, who when they were left alone, said: "I feel that my end is at hand." A convulsive tremor came over him and he gasped for utterance: the Pastor drew nearer and took him by the hand. "I have led a life of villany," he continued, "and now find that it leads to destruction; read to me, Sir, that psalm which you read to me last Friday."* The Pastor readily obeyed; as he proceeded the invalid trembled, and at the conclusion of the twelfth verse called out, "Stay, stay, I feel it all; it is all true, and all about me, and my young master wrote it." "Your young master! You mistake; this is written by King David, and is a prophecy of the cruel conduct of the Jews to Jesus Christ, particularly of Judas Iscariot, 'who betrayed his master.'" "No, no," he replied, "it's all about me. Did'n't 'false witnesses rise up against him and laid to his charge things that he knew not?' And was not I the wretch who planned it all?" The Pastor stood

* Psalm xxxv.

amazed, and thought the man labouring under a fit of temporary delirium, which he observing said: "I know what I say. I am not mad. I wish I were! I betrayed my master, and he is transported." "Transported!" exclaimed the Pastor; and a suspicion darted through his mind, which before he could embody in words, the man continued: "Yes, Mr. Henry Stirling is transported for a crime of which he is innocent, innocent as a child. I know all, and will confess. It was that you might take down my confession that I sent for you, and that before I die I may have that weight taken off my guilty conscience." "Are you then prepared to make a confession which will clear him of the charge, for which he is suffering?" "Yes." "Then I must send for the Squire, who is a magistrate; if you wish to do justice, this will be the safest and most easy way." Immediately a note was written and dispatched to the Squire. Meanwhile the Pastor directed the dying man to keep himself composed, if he wished to relieve his conscience from so foul and heavy a load. With difficulty the man followed his directions, whilst he knelt down and prayed as well for the soul, ready to quit its

tenement, as for sufficient strength of body to make this just though tardy retribution. When Squire Richard arrived, the man shrunk from his glance, and the Pastor thought that if he feared to meet a fellow mortal

"Drest in a little brief authority,"

what would be his condition when called upon to appear at that dread tribunal, before which the thoughts of the heart shall be revealed, and from which "no secrets shall be hid."

They took down his confession, which he made with difficulty, for nature's tide was ebbing apace, and rapidly merging in the ocean of eternity. From this confession, the signing of which was the last bodily act of the invalid, it appears that he had been the confidential servant of Mr. Henry Stirling, whose trust in him he had wretchedly abused. He began by petty pilfering, and finding himself successful proceeded to the commission of greater delinquencies. He associated with a set of sharpers, one of whom bore a strong resemblance in appearance to his master. Through the agency of this man he contrived to practise many frauds;

he dressed him up in his master's clothes, and followed him as his servant to carry the various parcels which he purchased. This system had gone on for some months, and the report of Mr. Stirling's approaching marriage with a rich heiress, obtained him credit, for the impostor always left one of his cards, with which the servant managed to supply him. At length a large order was given to a jeweller, who executed it under promise of speedy payment; when, however, the time was exceeded, several notes were sent demanding payment, which were all intercepted by the rascally servant. Irritated at such conduct, and suspicious that all was not right, he apprehended Mr. Stirling; the result is well known; the servant absconded, with the double intention of avoiding the trial, and finding a market for his goods. He had been returned about two months, safe, as he thought, from all chance of detection, for the partner of his iniquities had died suddenly; he was now scouring the country, reconnoitering some secluded place in which he might retire awhile on the fruits of his illgotten booty. But "there is a power above us" which "bringeth

the counsel of the wicked to naught, and maketh the devices of the people of none effect." Vice, however it may for a time triumph at the expense of innocency, must fail, whilst its victim will rise with redoubled vigour and be crowned with joyfulness. On the day of his accident his horse, purchased with part of the price, not of blood, but of what is dearer than animal life, the good name of his master, had started at a heap of rubbish lying by the roadside, for which he chastised him severely, and the animal broke out into a gallop, and his fall frustrated all the subtle schemings and finely spun iniquity of this foul Zimri.

The imprecations contained in the thirty-fifth psalm had first awakened his slumbering conscience, which would have relapsed to torpor again, but for this second accident, which appeared to him to have been sent that "destruction might come upon him unawares." His soul, therefore, was startled, and the cruel injustice he had done his master weighed so heavily upon it, that it irritated his bodily wounds, and brought him rapidly into that deadly condition, in which it might be said, "in the net

he had hid, did he catch himself; into that very destruction did he fall."* It was with great difficulty he could complete his confession, but the Lord gave him strength sufficient to accomplish it, as it had been to vindicate the ways of his providence to man, by affording the clue by which to unravel the web of iniquity, that involved an innocent though thoughtless young man, in infamy and punishment.

If those who practise villany, encouraged by the successful examples of others, could have beheld the dreadful end of this wretched Zimri, they would have witnessed an afflicting struggle so horrid and so striking as to arrest them in their career, and teach them to consider how dangerous is the path they are treading. It would have shown them that they are walking over embers which hide smouldering fires, laid to a train applied to a magazine of powder, which the slightest circumstances may ignite, and the hand of retribution will one day explode. As soon as he had signed the confession, he groaned deeply and muttered; "Oh! that I could ease my mind as readily of all its

* Psalm xxxv 8.

guilt as this will clear my injured master of his disgrace. The serpent is gnawing here — its poison is fire, which is lighted up in my heart, and blazing in my brain. This confession is but a drop of water thrown upon a lake of lighted brimstone."

His last moments were come, but life, that lately gushed on hurriedly, now seemed to suffer a reaction, and startle back upon itself in horror and dismay. Death and animation struggled for mastery; both were alike awful to him; the retrospect was terrible, the prospect appalling. His bodily sufferings were acute, but who shall describe those which goaded the soul, conscious of its blackened state, and all the dreadful miseries consequent upon it? The dying man felt it all. The excitation which had supported him through the confession was evaporated; and though that act had lent him a momentary relief, it was, as he emphatically said, only " like a drop of water thrown upon a lake of lighted brimstone." Like Judas, he confessed that he had betrayed the innocent, and like him he would have preferred self-destruction, to the gnawings of lacerated conscience, even though they had ultimately brought

with them remission for the past, and peace for the future. To him the experience of the present stings inflicted on him in these awful moments, disabled his soul, so completely infected with the leprosy of sin, from entertaining any expectation but a protracted and endless state of never-dying miseries. He died, and, like Cardinal Beaufort, made "no sign." "May God forgive him," was the Christian wish of Julia, as the Pastor concluded his account of these extraordinary events.

"The Squire," continued the Pastor, "feels himself much interested in the situation of yourself and Mr. Stirling. I have consulted with him on the best means of furthering to their issue, the train of events which an overruling Providence has directed. The result is, that I shall leave home to-morrow for London, to lay before the proper authorities this confession; and in the mean time, I must beg you to remove from this place, at least, till my return, when I fully hope to bring you happy tidings, that will restore you and him to your former rank in society, like diamonds, shedding greater lustre from your collision with misfortunes." The looks with which Julia acknowledged his zeal

and hopes, would have repaid him tenfold, had thanks been an object of his care. He was too happy to be instrumental in promoting the welfare of others, to require any other reward than

" That calm sunshine of the heart,
Whose incense smells to heaven,"

reflected from the consciousness of Christian duty. He saw in all the past transactions connected with the object of his visit to London, the hand of God, overruling the crafty and malignant counsels of vice, and suffering innocence to be obscured awhile, that " out of the fiery trial it might come forth, purified even as silver is pure." The death of the wicked and treacherous servant, evinced the retributive hand of Divine Justice, which though slow, is sure to fall upon those of whom Job has said *, " They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all others, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn."

* xxiv. 24.

CHAP. XIV.

THE LORD'S DAY.

THE LORD'S DAY.

The manner in which the Lord's day is spent in the country, is very different from that which may be observed in large towns, and in the metropolis in particular. It is certainly less obtrusive. The change from labour to leisure is less marked, and much more congenial with that Beneficent Spirit which appointed this day as a season of rest and praise. In the country, the ear is never at any time astounded by the ceaseless hum of men, and the more deafening rattle of wheels; the alteration, therefore, from the whistling of the plough-boy, and the self-cheering song of the carter, as

> "He drives his team a field,"

to the modest and quiet appeal of the church bells, calling the people to their duty in the house of God, is much less striking to the general observer, than that change which this day causes in London.

The heavy tramp of the dray-horse is still,

and the dull ponderous rumbling of the lumbering machine which accompanies it, is heard no more; but yet there is no silence, for still the ear is saluted with the smart steppings of the well furnished horse, drawing the splendid carriage of some richer family to church in the morning, and to the parks in the latter part of the day; and a stage coach, much too frequently, whirls over the stones as if exhilarated by its own rattle. As there are, however, but few stage coaches starting on this day, there is a great change visible in front of those houses or lumber caravansaries, which retard the passenger, and expedite the conveyance of goods. But the eye is perhaps the organ which finds the greatest change on this day. To say nothing of the dress of the various pedestrians, who pace the different streets, in smaller numbers than on other days, except when some place of public worship is disgorging its visitants, the long tiers of shop windows stripped of all their attractions, like a beauteous face hidden behind an impervious veil, afford a variety as striking as any which is generally to be observed; and at no period of the day, is that change greater than in the evening, when in-

stead of increasing by their display the splendour of the gas, they tend much to dull its brilliancy, and present an odd grouping of taste as diversified as the shades of colours, which streak these outward defences of the shop. "I speak now as a countryman; one who loves the unadorned hue of nature at all seasons, more than the dinginess of town, however illuminated by all that wealth, splendour, and merchandize collectively can bestow; one, who enjoys more to inhale the pure air of his own sequestered home, than

> Breathe the chaos of eternal smoke
> And volatile corruption, from the dead,
> And dying, sickening, and the living world
> Exhaled! *

and whose ears are more delighted with the warbling of birds, the hum of bees, and the bleating of sheep, than with all those multifarious sounds of discord harsh or sweet harmony which may be heard in the metropolis. Not that I am insensible to 'the music of sweet sounds;' or indifferent to the many productions of art which astonish the world; not that I can

* Armstrong.

forbear the glow of hearty satisfaction, when I behold trade rolling its peopled tide, from every division of the globe, into this one emporium, this heart of merchandize; or that I feel uninterested by the reality, that the good, the wise, the noble, the senator, the patriot, the royal, and the plebeian are here all congregated, in participation of the blessings of a well ordered liberty; and that whilst some are devising the welfare of their country, others are in the performance of the duties attached to their several callings, practically promoting that for which statesmen toil, and kings are duly anxious.—I am not so apathetical. I can justly appreciate all this. But when I ask myself what have I to do here, whose duties lie in a quieter and more contracted sphere? and when I find myself uneasy in body and distempered in mind, I long to return to my own circle and pursuits, which, though humble, when compared with those by which I am at present surrounded, have an interest more extended, an object more spiritual. I prefer the unobtrusive character of the Village Pastor, to that of more busy life, and his functions to those of higher rank and more splendid stations."

Such were the observations and thoughts

of Mr. Stanhope, who had been absent from his home more than a week after he had put matters in train, for the speedy restoration of Mr. Stirling to his liberty and lost reputation; and in almost the same terms did he express himself to his circle, when he reached once more his own quiet, happy dwelling, to which he was greeted by his dear Sarah and his affectionate children, who hailed the return of the Pastor, with all that unsophisticated buoyancy of delight, which is the rich treasure of the tender father and the happy husband. Cordial also was the welcome he received from Miss Gainsford, who had been at the Parsonage during his absence, and was duly apprised by letter of the prospect of soon seeing her beloved. It was on the day preceding that which is appointed and hallowed for the season of rest, that the Village Pastor once more found himself seated in his own old-fashioned parlour, surrounded by his wife and children. After satisfying himself, that they were all well and happy, he proceeded to make enquiries respecting his flock, and was glad to learn, that nothing material had occurred, to require particularly his immediate presence.—He heard with infinite pleasure,

from the garrulity of his children, that their mother had made repeated visits to those in the village whom he had occasion most frequently to attend. "And, papa," said his youngest girl, "Widow Morgan was so thankful to mamma, for pointing out to her some verses in Isaiah, which she desired her to read over very often; she said they had comforted her so much, for she was very low, as it was about this time last year that poor little Amy took cold when coming home from gleaning." "Can you show me those verses," said the delighted father, handing to her a bible, which always lay at hand. After a short search, she read:—"Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name: and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife in youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy redeemer."*

The Pastor kissed the dear little girl in token

* Isaiah, liv. 4, 5. 7.

of his approbation, and turning a beaming look upon his wife, which spoke his thanks most eloquently, he said: "How different are my feelings now from what they were last week at this time. I was then an insignificant being in the midst of thousands, who cared neither for my presence or absence. To-day I am the centre of my own family circle, who grieved when I left them, and are now rejoiced at my return. My thoughts were then giddy with noise and bustle which did not concern me; now I must turn them to subjects in which I must be a principal on the morrow." So saying, he retired to his study, to prepare his sermons for the following day; one of these was on the due observance of the sabbath. This subject was so much in unison with his own thoughts, after the many flagrant and gross violations of it, which he had witnessed in the metropolis, that he was glad to find a text in the second lesson of the morning service, which gave him an opportunity of preaching from it, and fortunately he had one prepared which with a little alteration suited his purpose. He was one of those ministers who make a point of selecting some portion of the regular service for the sub-

ject of their addresses from the pulpit. By this means he found the attention of his congregation more deeply fixed, and the instruction he wished to convey was consequently more lively and impressive. The principal advantage, however, of this method is the disclosing of that beautiful economy of godliness marked out in our appointed services; it attaches the people more intelligently to the doctrines and forms of the establishment, and familiarizes them with that "beauty of holiness" which characterizes our ritual, the most prominent and distinguishing feature of which is, in strict unison with the example of the Redeemer and his Apostles, a progression in holiness, a growing in grace, a pressing forward, and a maturing of the body of godliness, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ!"

The heart of the Pastor glowed, when on the following morning, he heard the simple bells chiming from the old tower of his church a summons, responding to thousands of others which invite to the united and common worship of God countless numbers of humble Christians, scattered over the face of the whole country.

It is a pleasing thought which members of the church of England may soothingly entertain, that at the very time they are called upon to enter the house of God to offer up their common prayers, their friends however separated from them in body, are united with them in soul, and, obeying the same summons, are offering up the same forms of prayer, and winging aloft the same divine aspirations. How frequently did this softening reflection dwell pleasingly on the Pastor's mind, but at no time did he more sensitively entertain it than on this morning, when a brief separation from his family and flock rendered them and the scene of his sacred labours, and all its association of ideas, more dear. The simple but pleasing sound of the bells awoke more vividly these associations so pure, so grateful, and his mental workings he afterwards embodied in the following

STANZAS

ON THE SABBATH BELL.

That Sabbath bell, that Sabbath bell,
How soothing is its simple knell!
It speaks of peace, it sweetly calls
The Christian to our hallowed walls.

Those walls which centuries have stood
When prouder domes have flow'd with blood;
And which have the asylum been
Of peace in many a troubled scene.

That Sabbath bell! how sweet its chime
Is answered — soothing thought sublime!
From north to south, from east to west,
Inviting all to praise, to rest.

Its summons in sweet fancy blends,
The sever'd hearts of distant friends,
In blest communion of the soul
Sway'd by religion's mild controul.

Oh! how I joy to hear its knell,
It gives the heart a holier swell;
For thus its solemn tones invite,
" In God's own house let all unite."

Let all unite. Let every heart
In rapt devotion bear its part,
And prayers united rise on wings
Of love, to Him, the King of kings.

Oh! who such union may despise,
Wafted like incense to the skies,
From thousand hearts expressed in one,
With heavenly power to mercy's throne.

That Sabbath bell! That Sabbath bell!
Long may its chime of worship tell
Such as our fathers loved to raise
In words devout, in songs of praise.

May that pure worship never fail
To cheer man on thro' life's sad vale,
And that sweet chime the Christian call,
Till Heaven's own Sabbath circles all!

The sky was bright and clear. It was one of those beautiful autumnal mornings, which show us that summer still lingers, reluctant to give place to the rude approachings of winter, now stealing on, and evincing its secret but resistless power by strewing the ground with crisped and seared leaves, the absence of which began now to be perceived on the tops of the trees which first shed their honours to the sweeping blast. The birds were pouring forth their cheerful hymns. Nature was reposing in grateful suspension from labour. The herds were grazing peacefully in the meads. The beasts of toil were luxuriating in the fat pastures. All breathed of happiness, of cheerfulness, of rest. "And shall man," said the Pastor, after directing the attention of his auditors to a scene of which rustic hearts are as susceptible as those more polished by society, "Shall man," said he, with an energy peculiarly his own, and which gave effect to his appeal, "Shall man alone, who has greater blessings than even these for which

to be thankful, who is endowed with a reasonable soul, and capable of infinitely more exalted feelings and perceptions than the other objects of creation, be insensible to the blessings which his heavenly Father bestows? Shall he alone convert into an occasion of sin that day, which was designed to elevate his thoughts and engage him in religious duties? Shall he alone find the time hang heavy on his hands, and refuse to acknowledge in his conduct his sense of the blessings and privileges to which the very brutes seem sensible? Shall he do this, when he has so many reasons to engage him to the due observance of the Lord's day, when he remembers 'how short his time is' — how like the leaf in autumn he fades away; and at the same time when he knows how great and glorious is the prize set before him, how much more transcendent is the rest in heaven; and remembers too that He, who came on earth to teach him the perfect way of peace, was no less than the Son of God?" He then directed them to the contemplation of that day of rest in heaven, of which the Christian sabbath is but the sign: to prepare for the attainment of which he exhorted them to lose no opportunity, to omit

no duty; and whilst they laboured thus with all their might, to trust the acceptance of their works to the alone merits of Him, from whom this day derives its name, as an earnest from his having risen from the grave, and ceased from his labours, of our resurrection and attainment of "honour, and glory, and immortality."

By one person in particular he was listened to with attention; every word he said seemed to find an echo in her heart. Her experience and hopes were in full tune with the melody which his animated strains called forth; and her full heart acknowledged, that the rest in heaven is the only object worthy of a Christian's strivings.

He was always listened to with great attention by all, for he was always in earnest, and his delivery was animated and plain; but on this occasion there was a more than ordinary degree of it to be observed: his words vibrated on the finest chords of their hearts, and filled them with the melody of praise and duty. They could better appreciate his instruction, because it was drawn from objects familiar to them all, the visible works of God, recommended more consciously to their hearts by the fineness of the season. He found that he could

most forcibly impress serious lessons on their minds by directing the attention of his flock to a contemplation of the handywork of God; how his goodness, his power, his love, his mercy, his goodwill to man are manifest in the various productions of the earth, in the adaptation of the several parts of the creation to their peculiar end and use, in the progress of the seasons, the ripening of fruits, the protection from storms. Thus did he make the volume of nature illustrate the more expanded and divine page of inspiration, going to the lilies of the field for instruction, and deriving holier and more elevated sentiments from the survey of the world, of which the Great Maker from the first constituted man the lord. But, above all, the topic in which he most delighted was the love of God to man, as revealed in the Gospel, in sending his Son into the world, "that we through him might not die, but have everlasting life."

Hence when the villagers were returning from the church to their respective homes, they would talk of the practicability of the sermon they had been hearing, and the visible objects around them would heighten the impressions they had received; and thus the stated prayers

which they used failed not of their effect when they called to mind how "all things worked together for good to those who loved God." And hence old dame Smith's shrewd and consoling observation on the rainbow might perhaps be traced to some sermon of the Pastor's, in which that idea had been started and illustrated.

Towards evening the two young friends, who were to leave the Hall on the following day to return to Alma Mater, strolled down to the Parsonage to say an unfashionable adieu. They reached it just as Mr. Stanhope and his family were starting for an accustomed walk to the village. He looked upon it as one part of his sabbath duties, when nothing prevented, to pass part of the evening in the village, accompanied by some or all of his family, among those of his flock who were unable to attend the public ministration of the word, and who, but for this arrangement, must have lost that spiritual support on this day which their more vigorous and healthy neighbours could enjoy. By this arrangement also his presence served as an effectual check upon those unseemly sports in which the young of both sexes are

apt to indulge when unrestrained by any whom they regard. Yet,

"His easy presence check'd no decent joy."

He rather rejoiced when he met any of his flock walking forth in the evening, accompanied by their children and wives. Knowing that the serenity of such an evening would not be lost upon their honest hearts, he would ejaculate his thanks, and exclaim, "This is a day of rest." He would stop and converse familiarly with them, and he seldom failed of leaving some impression on their minds pleasing and comfortable to their souls. The usual interchange of greetings was sometimes converted into a holy lesson. Remarks on the weather would call forth reflections on the good providence of God, and the common benediction of "Good night" frequently fell from the lips of those, whose hearts acknowledged that it was "the Lord only who could make them rest in safety."

The young men joined the party in their walk, and the conversation turned upon the fineness of the season, the late abundant harvest, and the success of his business in London. Mr. Harley was anxious to lead to the subject

of the morning sermon, to which he had been an attentive listener, and from which he, in common with others, had derived some edification. Knowing that anything like flattery on such a topic would jar the strings of the Pastor's well modulated heart, he felt great delicacy in adverting directly to the subject. At length he was happily relieved by some observations of Mr. Stanhope on the abuse of the Lord's day in London.

"Either," said he, "speaking generally, we behold in those who outwardly observe this day an overstrained asperity of demeanour, or a coldness still more repulsive. By some we are reminded of the Pharisees, 'standing praying in the corners of the streets that they may be seen of men;' by others of the Sadducees who rejecting the belief of the immortality of the soul, were cold and indifferent about its best interests; whilst a very large majority, like Gallio, caring not even to keep the outward appearance of religion, openly violate its duties, and make this day in particular an occasion for sinning."

"Your remark holds good, I believe," replied Mr. Harley, "when applied to large

places in general. In some of the populous manufacturing towns with which I am acquainted, I have felt and remarked the same thing, though I am aware that it is much more evident and striking in London."

"In town," continued the Pastor, "there is an overgrown population, and the extremes of virtue and vice, of wealth and poverty, of humanity and savageness, of knowledge and ignorance, are meeting in constant collision, and the contrast is hence more palpable. I know not, if circumstances should occur to render it incumbent on me, how far I should be content to be a minister in one of the large parishes of the metropolis, but in my present frame of mind I should be very reluctant to enter upon so arduous an undertaking. Independent of private parochial duties which are necessarily more than any available number of us can properly attend to, I entertain a repugnance to the worldliness manifest in many things which occur during the services, which is not confined to churches only. There is, in my opinion, too much conceded to pomp, to greatness, to effect. The simplicity of our almost divine service is destroyed. The fervour of devotion is inter-

rupted, and the voice of instruction neutralized, by an almost theatrical arrangement of sittings, and by other circumstances which, in spite of the best efforts of the well tempered zeal of the clergy, disturb the natural effect of our rational and sober services. How much more in character with the singleness of our faith is the simple and artless demeanour of a country congregation; for, though you may occasionally witness an idle or a lounging attitude, and a vacant, unmeaning stare, yet even these are more tolerable than the mixture of worldliness and fashion which accompanies so many even 'into the courts of the Lord's house.' One cannot, on the contrary, leave a country church, in which the duty is regularly and seriously performed, without feeling the heavenly truth, that the poor have the Gospel preached to them in all its native spirit, and they are not insensible of the blessing. This is more evident in those favoured spots where the innovations of dissension have made the fewest attempts. When that spirit has once found a resting place, there is, in spite of the best and active exertions of the regular ministry, a change. We look for peace, but behold a sword. True

and undefiled religion is abused, whilst another system, bearing its name, cramps the social energies; and discord, want of charity, strivings, envyings, and calumny are its ministering agents.

"I would not here depreciate the sincerity of others in the way of life, nor detract from the good which unquestionably has been done by many who are called dissenters, for I have known several in whom existed, in all its amiability, 'the milk of human kindness,' and a large share of christian Charity. It is the unhappy consequences which, I know not how, invariably attend the innovations of dissension which I deprecate. But, oh! how much more do I feel scandalized at that fashionable levity which blackens the latter part of this day in London, with scenes of display and irreligion which pamper the worst feelings of our nature, and mock the goodness of that love which instituted this a day of rest and praise, not of pomp and worldliness. The aristocracy and wealthy cannot surely be aware of the baneful influence of their example, neither can they plead in extenuation of their profanation the excuse which artizans and others, who are con-

fined six days to labour, may allege with some show of justice. That they should avail themselves of one day in seven, in which to rest from their toils and relax in harmless pursuits, is not to be scanned too closely; but that the noble and affluent, who find the other six days more than they can provide amusements for, should endeavour to kill time on this day, in displays of grandeur and pomp, is a sickening truth. Let them remember, that instead of killing time they are destroying their souls, which must live when time shall be no more. And their example too — here the mischief is more general, the contagion more fatal; their children, accustomed to witness such violation of sacred things, naturally catch the unholy impression, and hence evil habits luxuriate in their youthful minds. Their servants and dependants, at all times more ready to adopt vicious habits from their masters than copy their virtues, receive a warrant for licentiousness; and the world around them of the young and thoughtless, the apprentices and anonymous (*servum pecus!*) imitate the worse features, and scruple not at the means by which they may copy the likeness."

At this observation Miss Gainsford, who formed one of the party, heaved a sigh, whilst the tear of penitence started, as she remembered how greedily she once had joined in such scenes, and how bitterly the example of her thoughtless lover had been visited upon him by the villany of his servant.

"Hence," continued the Pastor, "fashion creates a corrupt appetite, and that appetite, less sated by every enjoyment, impels to the sacrifice of probity and virtue. How many suffer yearly from this contagion, and not a few date from it the termination of their guilty practices on the scaffold. Oh! that the great would consider this! Happily retired villages, such as ours, are removed from such contagion. Long may they continue so! The quiet neatness which we now witness, the tranquil scene before us, the plain demeanour of our peasants, and their attention to appear decent and tidy on this day in particular, are so many signs of a simplicity akin to godliness."

Here he stopped at the door of a cottage, into which he entered; he found old dame Jefferson reading her bible, and near her sat a little boy, her grandchild, about eight years of

age, looking out the collect for the following Sunday. As he entered she raised her spectacles, and having composed her clean checked apron, she would have risen and made her curtsey had not the Pastor prevented her: he took the bible from the table, and found that she had been reading the lessons for the day. Having explained to her such parts of it as she did not understand, and talked to her in such a manner as her infirmities required, he departed. Meanwhile the rest of the party had separated and entered different cottages; they were gladly received by the several inmates, and, as they passed along, the children, who were walking up and down the village, sought their attention by bowings and curtseyings, all of which were acknowledged by good humoured nods or greetings.

The evening began to close in and the whole party having again collected, prepared to return; they had reached the church-yard; the sun had disappeared; Hesperus was shining with his silver light; the large western window was ruddy with the deep crimsoning of the evening hues, whilst the eastern end was lying in deep shade.

"See," said the Pastor, "the clear and glorious effulgence which irradiates us here, is an apt symbol of the light of the Gospel, serene, perspicuous; whilst the sombre shade which falls before us there, is a resemblance of the darkness of the world which existed before 'the rising of the sun of righteousness,' whose healing wings 'brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.' Happy would it be if all who enjoy that light would walk in it! The Christian world would then be a more glorious heritage. 'Peace on earth and good will to men' would be conspicuous to 'the glory of God:' and love for him, in return for all his love for us, would become a more general and unvaried principle; each day would be a sabbath, and this day, the first of the week, would symbolize more truly and sweetly 'the rest prepared for the Lord's people!'"

Whilst the Pastor said this, Miss Gainsford, appreciating the remark, drew also her own reflections from the scene; she thought of the dark days of affliction which had gloomed her prospects, and then turned with thankfulness to the contemplation of the hopes which now shone upon her. The former was suggested to

her by the dark shade on the eastern end, and the latter rose beaming upon her, as her eye rested on the bright effulgence reflected from the western window.

They reached the parsonage — the two friends bade the Pastor and his family farewell; the usual family worship was celebrated, and peace and happiness, the result of virtue and religion, shed their sweet endearments over the family of

THE VILLAGE PASTOR.

THE END.

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